

ESTABLISHING OWNERSHIP: HOW AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
TEACHERS INFLUENCED THE PLANNING OF THEIR CONTINUING
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCES

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ESTABLISHING OWNERSHIP: HOW AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS INFLUENCED THE PLANNING OF THEIR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCES

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The literatures in adult and continuing education as well as teacher education reflect a history that emphasizes the importance of learner participation in program planning (Houle, 1980; Knowles, 1980; Richey, 1957) where planning is a mutual responsibility of the teacher(s) and the adult learners (Knowles, 1980). However, while the literature has continued to identify learners as an integral to program planning (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Little, 1993) as a means of empowering adult learners to address their educational needs in the context of their practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), there appears to be a lack of empirical examinations of how learners participate in the mutual relationships of responsibility for the planning work, how their participation may influence the development and implementation of continuing professional education program designed for groups of learners (Houle, 1972) and therefore why learner participation is an integral aspect of program planning in adult education. Specifically within the agricultural education profession in which this study is focused, the literature does not represent teachers as substantial participants in the planning of their continued professional education programs (Duncan, Ricketts, Peake, & Uessler, 2006). Instead, planning of continuing professional education programs in agricultural education has been reportedly

conducted by university and state education department staff members to provide technical skills and knowledge to practicing teachers.

The purpose of this study was to examine learner participation in the planning of continuing professional education. The researcher used multiple means of data collection associated with case studies including: 1.) formal in-depth interviews with each teacher, 2.) observation of the Board and committee meetings, and 3.) qualitative document analysis (Yin, 2003) as well as the facilitation of a 4.) a single focus group that provided a member check (Patton, 2002) of the draft themes developed in the preliminary data analysis.

Finally, an the over-arching theme emerged from the case study findings that provides a general thesis for the entire study and that offers a fundamental departure point for applying the results of the study in changing how we go about planning for continuing professional education in the profession.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Donna M. Moore completed her bachelors, M.A.T. in Agricultural Education and Ph.D. in Agricultural and Adult Education at Cornell University. She enjoys volunteering as an advocate for local agricultural enterprises and educational programs. She prefers to spend her free time outdoors with her family.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
A Personal Perspective	4
The Research Problem.....	6
Purpose and Research Questions.....	7
Importance of the Study	8
Definition of Terms	9
Summary.....	12
2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	13
Adult Education Program Planning.....	14
Learner Participation within Program Planning Models	15
Empirical Examinations of Program Models in Practice	22
Contemporary Program Planning Theory	25
Theory in Practice.....	29
Continuing Professional Education Across Professions.....	30
Learner Participation within Continuing Professional	
Education Models	30
Relationships Between Providers of Continuing	
Professional Education Programs.....	35
Participation of Teachers	39

Research in Agricultural Teacher Continuing Professional Education	41
Research Paradigm in Agricultural Education	43
Relevant Teacher Education Program Planning	44
Summary	51
3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	53
Rationale for a Qualitative Case Study Design	53
The Research Design	54
Preliminary Work	57
Pilot Testing	60
Making Initial Contact with the Case Study Group	61
Sampling and Selection of Participants	61
Data Collection	64
Content Analysis	64
Observations and Group Meetings	65
Two Rounds of Interviews	66
Round One Interviews	67
Round Two Interviews	68
Focus Group	69
Data Analysis Procedures	70
Trustworthiness, Validity, and Reliability	73
Researcher Bias and Limitations of the Study	74
Insider/Outsider Considerations	74
Limitations of the Study	76
Summary	77
4 FINDINGS: THE TEACHER PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR	

PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING MEETINGS	78
The Teachers	79
NYAAE Board Meeting October 13, 2007	84
Planning Committee Meeting October 13, 2007	86
Conference Call November 8, 2007	90
Conference Call November 12, 2007	89
Planning Committee Meeting November 17, 2007	91
Planning Committee Meeting December 14, 2007	94
Planning Committee Meeting January 26, 2008	97
5 FINDINGS: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TEACHERS TO CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.....	101
Theme: Evolution of the Planning Process	102
Theme: Increased Influence of Teachers on the Program Format ...	117
Theme: Responsibility for the Profession	129
Theme: Selection of the Conference Components	
Based on Relevance.....	141
Theme: Cooperation and Collaboration between Organizations.....	152
Theme: Responsibility for Communicating With and	
Representing Other Teachers	164
Over-Arching Theme: Teacher Ownership of Their Continuing	
Professional Education Experiences.....	174
Summary.....	176
6 SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS	180
Summary.....	181
Discussion.....	183

Learners Participated in Planning.....	187
Learners Influenced the Planning Work.....	188
Learner Participation in the Program Planning Influenced Professional Practice	190
Implications for Practice and Further Research	192
APPENDICES	195
A Alignment of Research Questions, Propositions, Interview Questions, & Supporting Literature	196
B Interview Script for Round One Interview	200
C Interview Script for Round Two Interviews	202
D Group Meeting One Observation Protocol	203
E Documents Analyzed as Part of the Case Study	204
F Letter to All Group Members Regarding Meeting Observations.....	206
G Consent Form for Observation of Meetings	207
H Letter to Teachers Regarding Round One, Part One Interview	208
I Consent Form for Round One Interview	209
J Letter to Teachers Regarding Round One, Part Two Interview	210
K Consent Form for Round Two Interviews	211
L Letter to Teachers Regarding the Focus Group	212
M Consent Form for the Focus Group Session	213
N Focus Group Protocol	214
O Summary of Category Development	224
P Web Based Survey Results & Analysis	226
Q 2005 Professional Development Final Evaluation Survey	233
REFERENCES	235

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Chain of Evidence.....	71
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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Data Collection Time-Line.....	55
Table 2: <i>a priori</i> Propositions.....	58
Table 3: Interview Descriptions.....	66
Table 4: Teachers in the Planning Group.....	79
Table 5: Continuing Professional Education Conference Workshops.....	151

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

According to the Cervero and Wilson's (2006) contemporary planning theory for adult and continuing education, planning is a "social activity whereby people construct educational programs by negotiating personal, organizational, and social interest in contexts marked by socially structured relations of power" (p. 24). The authors posit that it is "practically and ethically essential to ask who benefits and in what ways" (p. 26) from the continuing professional education program. Based on this theory, educational program planners need to have an understanding of who participates in the planning process and how those participants engage in the planning practices where people make decisions with others in social and organizational contexts where Cervero and Wilson also maintained that these planning practices occur at "multiple physical and metaphorical planning tables" (2006, p. 18) that exist not only during the traditional preparation of a program but continue to operate as participants influence how a program is facilitated while it is unfolding. Learner participation in their educational experiences has been emphasized in continuing professional education and adult education literature for decades (Houle, 1980; Knowles, 1970, 1980; Lindeman, 1926/1989; Schön, 1983; Sork & Buskey, 1986). Unfortunately the effects or influences of learner participation in planning on the learners and the educational programs have not been closely examined through empirical studies documented within the continuing professional education and adult education literature.

The Cervero and Wilson framework is in contrast to the typical continuing professional development program planning practices reported in the agricultural education literature. In that literature the planning process has been described as university-driven technical content updates (Duncan et al., 2006) where university

researchers stated, “as students, teachers, schools, curricula, legislation, and times change, providers of teacher education preparation must also re-evaluate the content they distribute to pre-service and current agriculture teachers” (p. 24). During this case study, the participants described that a few years ago these systems of continuing professional education program planning were common practice in New York State. However, during the last twenty years there has been a significant change in who has been responsible for planning and conducting the annual continuing professional education conference for secondary agricultural education teachers in New York State. According to one teacher who participated in this study, Stephanie (please note: pseudonyms are used throughout the paper):

I remember going to the conferences and filling out the forms about what do you want to see next and all of that stuff and then the next year it was just there. As far as who does the planning, I mean we, we did things like where is it going to be, conference locations but not the workshops. I think the workshops just happened through the State Education Department or whoever put them together. It wasn't really us.

This description of previous New York State teacher conference experiences is consistent with the planning practices described in the current agricultural education literature (Duncan et al., 2006). The changes in planning participation in this group of teachers were explained as a second participant, Mary reflected on the changes in who had responsibility for planning conferences:

Today we have our officers but we have state staff that can kind of lead us as well. I think our teamwork today is so good. Our state staff goes around the state, and they see what schools offer, what schools do really well, what programs are working, and I think that is valuable. I

know what is happening in my program; I don't know what is happening across the state, so it is neat that we have state staff that can identify certain teachers or certain programs that are really working. Our state [association] leadership has also been to the national agriculture teacher conferences and they bring back ideas from those conferences for workshop ideas. It is a big difference. I feel really good about what we offer now at our agriculture teacher conferences. I don't want to lose outreach staff and then have the responsibility go back on us like conference planning for instance - that is huge. People don't realize....if they were not involved then they don't know the difference we have today. They have no clue. Our conferences today are incredible....If Tech Prep funding did dry up, if we didn't have the Ag Ed Outreach staff, we would be back to where we were back then. This planning history has had a strong influence on how teachers have become involved in the planning work and how the leadership and responsibilities are distributed among teachers, state staff members, and other stakeholder groups.

On a more general scale, systematic efforts toward structured continuing education programming began to develop in the 1960s as a means of assisting professionals in their efforts to increase their knowledge of new technologies and information within their professional fields of study and maintain certification or licensure (Cervero, 1988, 2000; Houle, 1980; Queeney, 2000). The literature associated with continued professional education planning in agricultural education during the last two decades has focused almost exclusively on the identification of technical content topic needs of new and experienced teachers reported through census surveys (Anderson, Barrick, & Hughes, 1992; Barrick, Ladewig, & Hedges, 1983; Birkenholz & Harbstreit, 1987; Claycomb & Petty, 1983; Dormody & Torres, 2002;

Duncan et al., 2006; Edwards & Briers, 1999; Elbert & Baggett, 2003; Garton & Chung, 1996, 1997; Joerger, 2002; Kotrlik, Redmann, Harrison, & Handley, 2000; Layfield & Dobbins, 2002; Newman & Johnson, 1994; Roberts & Dyer, 2004; Ruhland & Bremer, 2002). This concentration of research has neglected the broader concepts of continuing professional education and educational program planning for adults that could include examinations of the theoretical frameworks and program models important to the agricultural education profession.

A limited amount of research has been published in the agricultural education literature regarding which groups or organizations have been involved in providing continuing professional educational programs in the profession (Anderson et al., 1992; Pals & Crawford, 1980). While these studies sought to identify the individuals or organizations that participated in and were responsible for planning continuing professional education programs, only the Pals and Crawford study (1980) included teachers in the list of potential program planners. Pals and Crawford found that teachers, administrators, state staff, and university faculty agreed that teachers should be involved in the “planning, presenting, and evaluation of in-service education activities” (p. 30). However, neither of these studies of the groups responsible for planning continuing professional education programs included an examination of the planning process, how the individuals or organizations worked together during the process, how the teachers were involved in the planning process, or how this process influenced the development of the education programs.

A Personal Perspective

The New York State Agricultural Education Outreach (AEO) program was created in 1997 through state legislative funding that was established through the joint efforts of the state association for agricultural teachers and the state Farm Bureau. The AEO program is located within Cornell University’s Department of Education. Its

purposes are to provide state level leadership for secondary student leadership programs, promote the development of agricultural education programs in local high schools, and provide teacher professional development program planning for secondary and postsecondary educators. I was a part of the group of volunteers from the state association of agricultural education teachers who pursued the original state funding for the project and wrote the first project proposal. I was the first employee hired in the project, and I worked for the AEO program for ten years until my acceptance of a graduate assistantship in the Department of Education. As part of the AEO staff, I served as the Senior Professional Development Specialist and as the State Advisor to the secondary agricultural education student leadership organization. Prior to my work in the program, I taught secondary agricultural education in a rural community in northern New York. While I was a teacher I also served as a member of the Board for the state agricultural education teachers association.

In my position in the AEO program, I was responsible for providing leadership for the design and implementation of state and regional continuing professional education experiences for the secondary agricultural educators in local school districts and regional Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) centers from urban and rural communities across the state. Another AEO staff person, identified by the pseudonym Lynn in this study, worked directly with the continuing professional education program planning committee. Staff members in our program have worked with the State's Agriculture Tech-Prep project director and the New York Association of Agricultural Educators (NYAAE) Board members to identify the continuing professional education program content needs and plan the annual four-day conference for the state's agriculture teachers.

Throughout my work with continuing professional education programs for agricultural education teachers in New York State, I have developed a strong belief

that teachers need to not only be involved in the planning process for any continuing professional education program but should be at the center of that process. As I have observed the national agricultural education activities, I am concerned that new continuing professional education models may be developed without a conscious effort to examine alternative theoretical frameworks. Most importantly I am concerned about the apparent absence or at best marginalization of secondary teachers in the planning work that is reflected in the current agricultural education literature.

While the AEO staff members have always agreed that it was important to work with the teachers in our planning work, we have never specifically asked the teachers how they thought their involvement affected them, their teaching experiences, or the professional development program that we planned. The partnership and collaboration that developed between our AEO staff and the teachers who participate in the continuing professional education program planning did so over a period of time through deliberate actions; however those actions did not occur necessarily through critical evaluation or development. It may be more accurate to say that the partnerships evolved through the development of relationships rather than because of a series of well-planned steps. These relationships evolved through Lynn's and my experiences as teachers prior to becoming staff members as well as our work with teachers on the various projects undertaken within the AEO program. As the researcher for this study, I bring with me these long-term relationships with the teachers on the NYAAE Board as well as my relationships with the AEO staff members, the Ag Tech Prep Director, and the university faculty.

The Research Problem: Understanding Learner Participation in Continuing Professional Education Program Planning

The literatures in adult and continuing education as well as teacher education reflect a history that emphasizes the importance of learner participation in program

planning (Houle, 1980; Knowles, 1980; Richey, 1957) where planning is a mutual responsibility of the teacher(s) and the adult learners (Knowles, 1980). However, while the literature has continued to identify learners as an integral to program planning (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Little, 1993) as a means of empowering adult learners to address their educational needs in the context of their practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), there appears to be a lack of empirical examinations of how learners participate in the mutual relationships of responsibility for the planning work, how their participation may influence the development and implementation of continuing professional education program designed for groups of learners (Houle, 1972) and therefore why learner participation is an integral aspect of program planning in adult education. Specifically within the agricultural education profession in which this study is focused, the literature does not represent teachers as substantial participants in the planning of their continued professional education programs (Duncan et al., 2006). Instead, planning of continuing professional education programs in agricultural education has been reportedly conducted by university and state education department staff members to provide technical skills and knowledge to practicing teachers. This literature in the agricultural education profession is not consistent with the current planning practices for the secondary agricultural education community in New York State where teachers not only participate but provide substantial leadership in the program planning process.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine learner participation in the planning of continuing professional education. The site and audience for investigating learner involvement was the planning of an annual continuing professional education program for New York State teachers of agricultural education. Four major questions guided this study:

1. How do agriculture teachers participate in the planning of their continuing professional education programs?
2. Why do teachers participate in the continuing professional education program planning process?
3. How do the agricultural education teachers influence the planning group decisions regarding the continuing professional education program planning activities and design?
4. How does the participation of teachers in the continuing professional education program planning group influence their practice and their profession?

Importance of the Study

Findings from this study may contribute to the continued development of adult education program planning theory. In particular this study may provide a greater understanding of the learners' perspective of the social and political nature of planning practices as well as their perspective of how they participate in and contribute to the planning of the educational program. The state planning group in this study reflects the practical application of Cervero and Wilson's adult education program planning theory (2006) which proposed that planning involves the inclusion of multiple stakeholders and takes place within a specific context where "people construct educational programs by negotiating personal, organizational, and social interests in contexts marked by socially structured relations of power" (2006, p. 24). However, while the Cervero and Wilson studies have examined the social and political construction of program planning from the perspective of continuing professional education planners, their work has not specifically examined how the learners involved in the program planning process perceive their participation in the planning. It is anticipated that this study will provide a descriptive analysis of the perceived

outcomes and contributions from the participation of one group of stakeholders in the planning of their continued professional education program.

The current literature in agricultural education lacks the theoretical and empirical work necessary to guide the national focus on the development of innovative continuing professional education programs for secondary teachers advocated by *The National Council for Agricultural Education* (Loudenslager, 2006). In particular the work of continuing professional education program planners in agricultural education needs to be examined in the context of contemporary program planning theory. Such research can serve as guidance for those individuals attempting to provide educational programs that contribute to the development of individual agricultural education professionals as well as their profession as a whole.

This study is important because it focuses attention on the inclusion of agriculture teachers in the planning of their own continued professional education program. The inclusion of teachers in the planning and the facilitation of the professional education program is a significant shift from university or state agency driven continuing professional education programs reflected in the current agricultural education literature that is reflective of the technical rationality. This study also provides a shift in the current research focus in agricultural education from simple needs assessment to the analysis of a broader approach to program planning.

Definitions of Terms

The following section provides definitions of terms used throughout this proposal. The definitions are provided from existing literature.

Agricultural education was formally established as part of the U. S. public education system a little over 140 years ago, initiated by land-grant universities established by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 (*Morrill Act*, 1862; *Morrill Act of 1890*, 1890) as well as the development of agricultural experiment stations created by

the Hatch Act in 1887 (*Hatch Act*, 1887). Later secondary-level agricultural education became a part of vocational education under the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 (Wirth, 1972). Those agricultural educators who sustain the vocational perspective define agricultural education as a curriculum with an emphasis in the science and husbandry of the agriculture industry designed to prepare students for jobs in their local communities (Talbert, Vaughn, & Croom, 2005) while others have chosen to position the program as an agricultural science curriculum with the goal to provide “instruction in agriculture emphasizing the principles, concepts, and laws of science and their mathematical relationships supporting, describing, and explaining agriculture” (Buriak, 1992, p. 4).

A profession has been described by both Cervero (1988) and Freidson (2001) as a very difficult, if not impossible term to be defined across professions and literature bases. Yet both researchers have agreed that in discussions of professional practices and continuing professional education, “avoiding a conscious attempt at defining (a profession) would promote the belief that professions are simply those occupations which have gained professional status” (Cervero, 1988, p. 5). Citing both Becker and Freidson, Cervero (1962, 1986 as cited in 1988) proposed that rather than attempting to use a “scientific concept” (p. 9) that utilizes a “static and process approach to define a profession” (p. 8), the definition for a profession might more appropriately be described as:

A ‘folk concept’ that is historically and nationally specific. This approach contrasts dramatically with both static and process approaches in that it assumes that there is no such thing as an ideal profession and that no set of criteria is necessarily associated with it. There are only those occupations which are commonly regarded by the general public (folk) as professions and those which are not (p. 9).

Therefore, “a profession is determined by which occupations in a specific society at a given historical time have achieved professional status and privileges” (p. 9). However, a panel of experts in continuing professional education defined a profession specifically as:

An occupation that requires the possession of a postsecondary degree to qualify for entry, that involves the independent practice or application of a defined and organized body of competencies which is unique to that occupation, and which is formally recognized and regulated – internally or externally- by some type of licensure, accreditation, or permit (Hunt, 1992, p. 6)

Continuing professional education programs are designed to assist practitioners in their efforts to improve their skills and knowledge in order to address the problems of their professional practice and maintain certification for licensure (Cervero, 1988, 2000; Houle, 1980; Nowlen, 1988). A panel of experts in continuing professional education convened in 1992 by the U.S. Department of Education developed the following definition of continuing professional education as

the varied modes and content of education and learning that are recognized by appropriate authorities as contributing to the knowledge, competence, development, and performance of individual professionals after they have been licensed as practitioners (Hunt, 1992, p. 5).

While the traditional view of continuing education emphasizes the need for members of specific professions (ex: medicine, law, education) to direct their own continuing education programs, “the emerging view is that individuals trained in the field of continuing education have the most appropriate background for this function” (Cervero, 1988, p. 4). Cervero proposed that effective continuing education practices “blend what we know about adult

education and learning, human resource development, the structure and content of preservice preparation, and the context of professional practice” (p. 17).

Inservice education is a term used to describe educational programs offered to professionals who are already employed and practicing their professional work (Siedow, Memory, & Bristow, 1985). Teacher education literature defines inservice education as “a process in which instructors gradually acquire a body of knowledge and skills to improve the quality of teaching for learners and, ultimately, to enhance learner outcomes” (Kutner, Sherman, Tibbetts, & Condelli, 1997). Inservice education programs are usually offered as part of the professionals’ normal work-day.

Planners of continuing professional education programs “refer to a family of the roles that have responsibility for social interventions with an educational outcome in any social or organizational setting, such as learners, teachers, program planners, social activist, community organizers, instructional designers, human resource development directors, organizational developers, managers, leaders, and policy analyst” (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 4)

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine learner participation in the planning of continuing professional education. This chapter provided a description of the research problem, the researcher’s role in the process in New York State, assumptions about continuing professional education of teachers, the problem and purpose of the study, and the research questions that guided this study. The following section will be a review of the literature relevant to teacher professional development, collaborative relationships between continuing professional education providers, and adult education program planning theory.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine learner participation in the planning of continuing professional education. The site and audience for investigating learner involvement was the planning of an annual continuing professional education program for New York State teachers of agricultural education. While no recent studies in the agricultural education literature specifically have examined the theories that inform the planning practices for continuing professional education programs, two studies published in secondary career and technical education literature examined the continuing professional education program providers (Anderson et al., 1992; Pals & Crawford, 1980). These studies identified the participation of multiple providers of professional development programs; however they did not identify the theories that informed the planning practices enacted by the providers, who conducted the various planning activities, or how the participation of the various representatives of the different providers in the planning group influenced the program. With little published work in agricultural education regarding continued professional education program planning, this study is anchored in the literatures from continuing professional education, teacher professional development, and adult education program planning.

There is a sizable amount of theoretical and empirical literature resulting from the study of continuing professional education, staff development, and inservice programs across professions. Within this literature, particular emphasis has focused on the format or model of the educational programs for professionals as well as the process of planning programs. Within each of these areas one common element of discussion is the role of the learners as participants in the program as well as their participation in the planning work. For example, in his analyses of the history of in-

service teacher education Richey (1957) provided an historical description of the shifting expectations of teachers as participants. According to Richey early in-service education programs were intended to address the educational and social deficiencies of the teachers who typically lacked extensive formal education. It was not until the 1930s that educational leaders considered the ability of teachers to contribute to their own learning and appreciated the value of using a staff development approach to school improvement where teachers, supervisors, and others worked together to create education programs within schools to address particular problems (Richey, 1957). Richey explained “the aim of the co-operative effort was the solution of the problem; an important concomitant was the growth of teachers and supervisors in understanding and in the ability to attach and solve problems” (p. 61). This work illustrates that teachers began participating in their own professional education experiences more than seventy years ago; however, recent literature reveals a continued struggle to define and include teachers as participants in the planning of their continued professional education programs.

Adult Education Program Planning

The program planning studies in adult education provide a source of planning theory and models to draw upon as a resource to examine the planning practices in agricultural education. According to Cookson (1998) the term adult education first appeared in England in the early 1800s as a term specifically used to describe government policies for adult literacy programs. It wasn’t until after World War I that the definition of the term broadened to include “liberal and nonoccupational policy” (p. 2). With the establishment of the American Association of Adult Education in 1926 the term “had a much broader meaning” in the United States that included a “spectrum of education and training program in an infinite variety of organizational settings” (pp. 2 - 3). Both Lindeman (1926/1989) and Bryson’s (1936) work in this

time period emphasized the role of the individual learner as an active participant in the development of his or her own educational experiences. As Bryson explained, “when one begins with the principle that adult education is self-education, that it starts with the student where he is and takes him in the direction in which he wishes to go, any beginning is as good as any other, provided the teacher is good enough” (p. 62). The role of learners as participants in the planning of his or her education has varied across the program models as they have evolved since the 1920s.

Learner participation within program planning models

In their examination of program planning models in adult and continuing education Sork and Caffarella (1989) explained that the planning models were useful “tool(s) used to help understand and to bring order to a complex decision-making process” (p. 234) faced by planning practitioners across professions. However, Sork and Caffarella did caution practitioners that models are expected to be oversimplifications of information but they are intended to help others understand the “underlying logic of a planning process explicit and provide verbal or graphic cues to help practitioners systematize their work” (p. 234). Since 1950 numerous models have been proposed and evaluated in adult education. Sork and Buskey (1986) summarized a review of 93 books and other publications of program planning models published between 1950 and 1983; more recently Boone, Safrit, and Jones (2002) conducted another review of the literature and identified an additional five models published since 1983. In addition to the literature reviews of adult education models, Pennington and Green (1976) investigated the program planning activities within six professions while Sork and Caffarella (1989) provided an analysis of the planning components found in the adult education literature. The reviews in the adult education literature proposed that fundamentally there was little difference in the planning models with respect to the core planning steps that originated in Tyler’s (1949)

foundational work in curriculum planning. Until recently the planning theories have been limited to those traditional planning processes which included needs assessment, objective development, program design and implementation, and evaluation and accountability (Boone et al., 2002). The following section will examine the emphasis each of the major program planning models placed on the role of adult learners as participants in his or her educational experiences in an effort to establish the role of learners in the various planning theories.

The major program planning models in adult education have all reflected the core components of planning described by Tyler (1949) and each has included some aspect of learner participation. London's early model (1960) has been referenced in a number of studies and other planning models (Brookfield, 1986; Cole & Glass, 1977; Kowalski, 1988). The core planning components of London's model included the establishment of an optimum climate for learning, the determination of the needs of the students, the enlistment of student participation in planning, formulation of clear educational objectives, the design of a program plan, and finally a planned system of evaluation. Cole and Glass applied this model to their work because it identified "active involvement of participants in the program planning process" (p. 79).

The program planning models of the 1970s (Freire, 1970/2006; Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1970) continued to embrace the value of learner participation in educational planning. Knowles (1970, 1980) emphasized the need for integral learner participation in his planning model where planners and teachers were expected to assist learners in identifying their needs, plan the learning experiences with the learners, develop strategies to motivate learners, select learning methods, provide resources, help learners measure the learning outcomes by providing a climate where adults "feel accepted, respected and supported; in which there exists a spirit of mutuality between teachers and students as joint inquirers" (1980, p. 47). According

to Knowles, “the ideal situation is when the group is small enough for all participants to be involved in every aspect of planning every phase of a learning activity” yet, “in a number of situations, however....a planning committee has to be appointed in advance” (p. 47). Freire’s planning methodology (1970/2006) was grounded in his literacy work in Brazil where he advocated for democratic education in which all individuals, teachers and students, were equal participants in planning and conducting educational experiences. As Freire explained, “authentic education is not carried on by “A” *for* “B” or by “A” *about* “B,” but rather by “A” *with* “B,” mediated by the world – a world which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it” (p. 93). In another model of the early 1970s Kidd (1973) anchored his planning design in the work of Tyler where he clarified the role of learners as planning participants. Specifically, Kidd proposes that “the adult learner, far more than the child, may expect to take a more active part in the consideration and selection of what he is to study” (p. 271). He argued, “it is clear that where the learner does take part in the development of the curriculum, this act leads to a learning experience that is markedly different in quality” (p. 271). Griffith (1978) continued the decade’s commitment to learner participation with his emphasis that the needs of learners must come first in adult education planning practice. However, he cautioned that frequently organizations designed and implemented programs for a number of other reasons including “promote preselected objectives...an attempt to utilize unused space profitably...as a public relations effort...belief that the costs of such programs are less than the financial support that will be provided by government” (pp. 392 - 393). Regardless of the motivation that initiated a program’s development, Griffith cautioned practitioners to understand that, “the process is inherently political, involving the values of the program planner, experts in the particular subject matter,

representatives of the intended learners, and the parties who will bear the costs” (p. 393).

During the following decade the position of learners as participants in adult education program planning made a subtle shift from the integral involvement in all aspects of planning to an effort to focus learner participation based on the specific aspects of the planning work. Boyle (1981) followed the traditional planning sequence but distinguished the difference in learner involvement based on the type of program where developmental programs involved learners in determining needs and the “scope and nature of the program” (p. 7), while learners in institution based programs were “involved in implementing the learning experiences” (p. 7) , and in informational educational experiences Boyle perceived learners as “involved primarily as a recipient of the information” (p. 7). Boyle contended that “the design of the process of involvement should be based on the program situation rather than on the soundness of the idea of involvement” (p. 106). Knox (1986) used traditional program planning components in his planning model and emphasized that the responsibilities for the planning process lied with the teacher. Knox recommended that learners were a source of needs identification. He proposed that learners could contribute to the needs identification by stating their topic preferences, the “proficiencies they want to enhance” (p. 57), and demonstrating the “choices they make when given opportunities to participate in educative activities” (p. 57). Knox encouraged learner involvement in setting objectives through the use of a planning committee or a commitment of specific time at the beginning of the learning experience to establish the objectives. In contrast to these models of the 1980s Brookfield (1986) provided a critical examination of the traditional “institutional model” (p. 202) of program development. Brookfield explained that his students, practitioners of program planning, had repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the institutional model as they “are unable to

recognize themselves in the pages of most program development manuals” (p. 206). Therefore, Brookfield emphasized that practitioners in adult education program planning must recognize the importance of treating participants as adult learners and needed to be involved in all aspects of the planning work.

Recent theoretical and empirical studies of adult education program planning have included a broader understanding of the complex context in which planning work occurs, including the relationships between planners and participants. Cervero and Wilson (1994a, 1996, 2006) have advocated for planning theories that “account for what actually happens when people plan educational programs and also provide a guide to practical action” (2006, p. 24). In an effort to accomplish these expectations, Cervero and Wilson’s theory was based on their extensive case study work across a variety of planning projects. As a result of this work their theory defined continuing professional education program planning as “a social activity whereby people construct educational programs by negotiating personal, organizational, and social interests in contexts marked by socially structured relations of power” (p. 24). According to this theory planners must examine who is participating in the planning work, what groups are not represented at the “planning table”, and how the relationships of power between planners and participants as well as the relationships between other members of the planning group interact to influence the planning activities. The interactive Caffarella (1994, 2002) model builds off of previous models in adult and continuing education, and as such, it encourages learner participation in program planning. While this model is grounded in previously developed models, Caffarella explained that this it:

Differs however, in four primary ways: by design, it is interactive and comprehensive; people and place are acknowledged as important in the planning process; differences among culture are taken into account in

the planning process; and practitioners find the model useful and therefore a practical tool. (2002, p. 20)

Caffarella's model has been represented as a circular model to emphasize that within the work of planning educational programs there are "no real beginnings or endings" to the sequence of planning activities. Instead, "persons responsible for planning programs for adults are encouraged to use relevant parts of the model in any order and combination based on the planning situation" (p. 21). Sork's model (2000) also reflects an effort to represent the non-linear process of educational planning. His "questions-based approach to planning" (p. 180) emphasized the importance of asking questions as a means of developing better programs through better planning. Within his discussion he indicated that the planning work was done by a planning group and, while learner participation was not an explicitly stated component of the model, he did provide the question "who isn't here who should be and how can we get them involved?" (p. 180) as one example of the many questions planners must ask themselves and others in an effort to construct relevant programs.

Houle's model (1996) provided a slight variation from others with an emphasis on the specific aspects of the early work of planning a program. However this model, like others of this time period, continued the recognition of the context of planning as an integral influence on the program creation with an emphasis on examining planning work from the perspective of the learner. Within this context Houle emphasized nine planning assumptions which included the point that educational programs may be planned by learners as well as a number of other individuals. Boone et al. (Boone et al., 2002) have used "pilot field test and the findings of several applied research projects" as well as studies in "planned change human and social systems" (p. 41) to revise their earlier planning model (Boone, Dolan, & Shearon, 1971). While this model focuses on an understanding and commitment to the organization's function,

structure, and management process there also exists within the model a strong commitment to “linking the organization to the publics” it currently serves as well as potential future clients. Within this commitment Sork proposed that target publics for educational programs may be represented by “leaders and spokespersons” (2002, p. 43) in the process of needs assessment; however, this model did not specifically include learners in the other aspects of the planning work.

Adult educators have suggested that there seems to be more to the process of planning than was reflected in the models. Sork and Caffarella (1989) observed that the current planning theory did not account for the context of the planning activities that “largely determine how planning is done” (p. 243) and that the literature on program planning “consists mostly of descriptions of how planning should be done rather than descriptions of how planning is done” (p. 233). Based on these findings, Sork and Caffarella proposed that program planning theory was “increasingly irrelevant to practice” (p. 243). Sork (2000) cautioned that to “overemphasize the technical domain of planning err either by not acknowledging the sociopolitical and ethical domains or by presenting one set of techniques and implying that it can be universally applied” (p. 177). Instead, “the technically-capable planner develops a rich repertoire of techniques and has the sensibility to select those that best fit the circumstances” (p. 177). According to Sork, in order for adult education program planners to develop this “repertoire of techniques” a new theory of program planning was needed that recognized and accounted for the context in which planners worked.

In Sork and Caffarella’s (1989) literature review the authors noted that most of the previous planning models neglected to recognize that groups of people were involved in the planning of programs and they failed to “explore the relevant roles of the various actors in the planning process” (p. 93). Cervero and Wilson’s (2006) planning theory has called for adult educators to recognize “planning practice as a

social activity of negotiating interest in relationships of power” (p. 5) where the technical planning procedures for conducting needs assessments, creating program designs, and developing program evaluations are still evident in some format but are reframed with a focus on the people and settings of the educational program (Cervero & Wilson, 1996).

Empirical examinations of program models in practice

While all of the major programs planning models have included some aspect of learner participation, over the last sixty years there has been only a sporadic and infrequent effort to examine the participation of learners in the planning work. According to the report of Brunner, Wilder, Kirchner, and Newberry (1959) Spence and Shangold examined the trends in adult education programs in public schools from 1944 – 1947. The Spence and Shangold study identified 18 factors “related to the excellence of adult education programs in public schools” (as cited in Brunner et al., 1959, p. 128). This list of factors number seven was the “recognition of responsibility of the local community to assist in developing the program”, while number eight was the “readiness of the school to work with organized groups in the community”, and finally number nine was “broad involvement of the community in building the program” (p. 128). Brunner et al. also cited the work of Matthews “who analyzed 9,400 County Extension Service programs, found that close to two-thirds of these, 63 per cent, were developed by using committees representing all communities after possible programs had been discussed at community meetings, or by employing this device plus including representatives of other agencies” (p. 132).

In their 1966 empirical study of the planning practices of one Iowa county cooperative extension program, Beal, Blount, Powers, and Johnson (1966) proposed a 34 step model for local social action. The Beal et al. model called for the participation of community members with an interest in an identified need early in the planning

process. This study was based on a pre-established set of criteria for successful program planning developed by county agents and stakeholders. Within the nine criteria the first criterion was the use of a representative community committee to plan the program. Additional criteria were associated with participant involvement in program planning; these included criterion two which addressed how the committee members were selected, criterion three addressed the replacement of members as their terms ended in the group, and criterion four focused on the staff and member understanding of his or her roles and responsibilities in the planning work. The implementation of each criterion was rated by the participants and staff through multiple surveys, transcriptions of program planning meetings, notes from a participant observer, and interviews with the staff and members of the state action committee. While the results indicated that the committee did satisfy the criterion regarding the identification of representative groups to serve on the committee and the membership selection criteria, the group reported that it was difficult to meet the criteria for replacement process for members as their terms ended. The study reported a mix of positive and negative results for the accomplishment of the criterion for staff and member understanding of the roles and responsibilities. One of the general findings was that the pre-established criteria for each of the planning components were not used in the program planning experiment.

During the 1970s a cluster of studies in adult education examined a variety of aspects of the influence of learner participation in program planning. McLoughlin (1971) examined the influence of learner participation in planning to learner motivation and achievement where he found that there was a significant relationship between participation and motivation but no significant influence of participation on learner motivation. This study used two experimental groups of learners who planned program and two control groups who used the programs designed by the experiment

groups. In another study in the same time period Jones (1973) compared researcher and university faculty perceptions of important steps in planning with those steps practitioners identified as most important. University people ranked participation of learners important while practitioners rated it not as important in practice. In 1977 Cole and Glass (1977) conducted an experimental study of all 18 employees in a North Carolina hospital who participated in a continuing education program. Six of the employees participated in the fall course in which the employees participated in planning while 12 employees in the spring session completed the course as the fall students had planned it. Cole and Glass used daily logs from teachers as well as pre and post tests to analyze the student engagement. This study reported that learner participation in planning did appear to have a positive impact on student achievement; however, no evidence was found to support the hypotheses that participation in planning influenced the learners' retention of information. The study results also indicated that participation in planning may have influenced the student attitudes about their learning experiences.

In a case study of continuing professional education programs at six land-grant universities, Fox (1981) examined how the organizational structures of the CPE programs influenced the participation of clients, faculty and administration in the planning work. Fox justified the study by explaining that "the notion that who participates in planning adult education programs affects the quality of the program has been a cornerstone of many planning models for CPE programs, particularly for programs for professionals" (p. 209). Data were collected through a total of 51 total interviews with each "university's chief academic officer, continuing education program administrators and individual faculty members" (p. 214) as well as the analysis of documents associated with the program planning work. Fox reported that the "participation of clients increased when planning occurred in the context of

campus-wide continuing professional education delivery systems and decreased in college-based delivery systems” (p. 209). Finally, in their study of 93 books, monographs, journal articles, chapters in books, and reports, Sork and Buskey (1986) found that “most of the literature fails to recognize that groups or teams will be involved in the design and planning of programs and fails to explore the relevant roles of various actors in the planning process” (p. 93). While these studies have provided some evidence that learner participation in program planning is helpful the relatively few studies within the literature proposes that additional examinations of learner participation is necessary to substantiate the planning theories. In particular, given the complex dynamics of planning proposed in the current planning theories, additional studies are necessary to examine how learners participate in planning within these recognized contexts.

Contemporary Program Planning Theory

In traditional planning theory reflected in the technical updates provided by agricultural education, the university faculty and state staff were responsible for the agenda. Cervero and Wilson (1994a, 1994b, 2006) have contended that the literature has not been able to capture and articulate the parts of the planning job that involves negotiating with decision makers and others engaged in the program, what Forrester (as cited in Cervero & Wilson, 2006) refers to as the “people work” of planning. While planners have a position of power, they are not free to do as they please as some planning models might suggest “nor are planners’ actions utterly determined by the social and organizational structure in which they work” (1994b, p. 253). This theory “places power at the center of planners’ action as the property that makes action possible” (p. 254). The vision is that “all people affected by the program have the right to participate in constructing it” (1994b, p. 259). These people include: “learners, teachers, planners, institutional leadership, and the affected public” (p. 260)

and “the interests of these groups are always negotiated” (p. 260) during the planning activities. An important planning action is to consider who from each of the groups is represented at the planning table and if they are “legitimate representatives” (p. 260) in a particular situation. Planning educational programs for people involves balancing the power of individuals and organizations through negotiations to responsibly respect the interest of all the groups of people affected by the program. Planning theory must represent the entire phenomena, “recognizing that people have ‘power’ means that they have a certain ‘capacity’ to act, rooted in a specific socially structured relationship; such capacity to act is not simply a consequence of individual attributes” (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 85). In other words, the structure created by the positions of the state staff and university faculty have an influence on how the agricultural education teachers perceive their ability to enact their ideas and input into the program planning.

Cervero and Wilson (1994a, 2006) used the real and metaphorical *planning table* to articulate where and how planners work within groups to develop educational programs by negotiating the power relations, interests, and ethical commitments represented in these groups to produce programs with “educational and political outcomes for multiple stakeholders” (2006, p. 85). The planning table was used to describe all of the planning activities and interactions that lead to the implementation of an educational program where planning is conducted by “real people in complex organizations that are marked by historically-developing and structurally-organized power relations and human wants and interests” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994b, p. 249). The planning table includes activities and interactions in multiple formal and informal locations that occur before, during and between the program sessions (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). Learners are at the planning table during the program and their participation may be evidenced as the program plan changes and is modified to better

suit the learners and the situation. These changes may also be made by the teacher or facilitator in consideration of the needs of the learners. Based on this theory and empirical work, planners cannot avoid addressing or negotiating power and interests, and they cannot be neutral in the planning process if they are going to be able to accomplish democratic outcomes for their programs.

The role of the planners is critical in the planning process; they must recognize what is going on at the planning table and how their perspective is important in recognizing who benefits from the educational, social, and political program outcomes. Most importantly, this theory suggests that planners must recognize who in the planning group has the power to influence the direction of the program (Cervero & Wilson, 2006) and be prepared to negotiate the political as well as educational program outcomes in a balance between the needs and interests of all stakeholders. This theory describes the “intersection of educational and political outcomes as routine – not extraordinary – in program planning” (p. 13) and as a part of the necessary planning skills not recognized in earlier planning models and theory. While previous program planning models have focused on the planner as the critical player in the planning process, in practice the planner is only one person in the complex network of interactions that occur as a means of developing the educational program where the “program planning practice is a social activity in which people negotiate personal and organizational interests to construct adult education programs” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994b, p. 249) at the planning tables occurs before the formal planning discussion even begins (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). The Cervero and Wilson theory emphasizes that within this work planner(s) need to consider who is involved in the social and political interactions, specifically “all people affected by the program have the right to participate in constructing it, knowing which people should be involved and how to create conditions for their substantive involvement is almost always an uncertain,

ambiguous, and risk-taking activity” (p. 259). While the theory is unable to identify how the people will interact and how their interaction will influence the program development, “by defining planning as a social activity, what matters most is which people are at the table deciding the features of an educational program” (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 85) and “whose interest finally prevail when bargaining at the planning table is strongly influenced by people’s political relationships” (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 95).

Since it was first proposed, the Cervero and Wilson (2006) planning theory and model have been critically reviewed and challenged. One of the first concerns shared by Sork (1996) focused on the concept of negotiating, a key component of the theory. Sork’s concern was that the strong emphasis on negotiation may lead planners to overlook other aspects of planning, and he did not want planners to mistakenly think of planning as no more than negotiating. Instead Sork (1996) argued that “responsible planning...is much more than negotiating; it also involves applying knowledge and skills that have only an indirect or marginal relationship to the power and interests of the actors” (p. 83). In their response to this concern, Wilson and Cervero (1996) concurred that the emphasis on recognizing and addressing power and interest in planning does not negate the importance of technical skills needed to develop and conduct educational activities. The concern emphasized in the theory is that planners need to be diligent about “seeing these political dimensions of planning so that our practice can be more responsible” (p. 91). Sork (2000) has credited Cervero and Wilson (1994a, 2006) with triggering a necessary and “fundamental shift” (p. 174) away from the technical-rational planning tradition. While the emphasis on negotiations as a “key analytical concept” (p. 174) of the planning theory continued to concern Sork (2000), he agreed that the “sociopolitical dimensions of planning have been seriously neglected and deserve more attention” (p. 174).

Theory in practice

A number of published studies (Archie-Booker, Cervero, & Langone, 1999; Carter, 1996; Drennon, 2002; Grudens-Schuck, 2000; Guthrie & Cervero, 2001; Hendricks, 1996; Kleiber, 1996; Maclean, 1996; McDonald, 1996; Mills, Cervero, Langone, & Wilson, 1995; Rees, Cervero, Moshi, & Wilson, 1997; Scott & Schmitt-Boshnick, 1996; Sessions & Cervero, 1999; Umble, Cervero, & Langone, 2001) have applied the Cervero and Wilson planning theory in the practices of adult education program planners. Cervero and Wilson have also identified practitioner focused program planning guides that have adapted their theory into practice. Caffarella's (cited in Cervero & Wilson, 2006) practitioner's guide made power and negotiations central to understanding the context of planning while Donaldson and Kozoll's (cited in Cervero & Wilson, 2006) work reflects the significance of institutional collaboration. Finally, while Sork (2000) has contributed thoughtful reflections and challenges to the Cervero and Wilson theory, he has adapted the theory by expanding the planning techniques to utilize a questioning approach to address the complexities of planning in social and political contexts.

The Cervero and Wilson (Cervero & Wilson, 2006) theory of program planning in adult and continuing education aligns with the practices of the New York State agricultural education planning group as it recognizes the complexity of the context in which the planning work takes place as well as the potential influence of the relationships between the multiple organizations and individuals who have come together to construct the annual continuing professional education program. This theory provides a lens through which the researcher may examine the planning process in the context of these relationships and specifically the participation of the teachers in the planning process.

Continuing Professional Education across Professions

While individual professions, including the field of teaching, conduct their own continuing professional education programs and generate their own empirical studies around their continuing professional education practices, the field of continuing professional education has existed for decades. Within this field extensive work has been done to examine both existing and potential new educational program models as well as planning practices best suited to address the educational needs and interests of practicing professionals across professions. This study draws upon this field of research to understand the complexity of continuing professional education program planning process, including the participation of teachers as learners in the planning process.

Learner Participation within Continuing Professional Education Program Models

In his foundational work in the field of continuing professional education, *Continuing Learning in the Professions*, Houle (1972, 1980) challenged professional educators to develop opportunities for their members to become engaged in life-long learning experiences. Houle recognized that the professionals he identified as optimal learners were “constantly observing, reflecting, reading, discussing, and taking part in organized programs of instruction, incorporating into their performance what they learned by such means” (1980, p. 304). However, Houle was concerned that only a few individuals within a profession were engaged in this level of professional learning while the remainder were either completely disengaged from professional learning or simply satisfied with participating in what he and later Nowlen (1988) referred to as an update model of educational instruction. This model was described as:

Typically an intensive two- or three-day short course, a single instructor lectures and lectures and lectures fairly large groups of

business and professional people who sit for long hours in an audiovisual twilight, making never-to-be-read notes at rows of narrow tables covered with green baize and appointed with fat binders and sweating pitchers of ice water. (Nowlen, 1988, p. 23)

This format for continuing professional education was reflective of the early teacher in-service educational programs (Richey, 1957) designed to address the knowledge deficiencies of early public school teachers in the 1800s, where the deficiencies were identified by administrators rather than the teachers. In particular Houle (1980) questioned why there was continued acceptance of the update model of continuing education since there was such a striking contrast between the complexity and sophistication of professional work and the simple learning experiences of the model. Specifically, the update model illustrates a pervasive disregard for the foundational components of adult education in which “the curriculum is built around the student’s needs and interests” where “texts and teachers play a new and secondary role” and “the resource of highest value...is the *learner’s experience*” (Lindeman, 1926/1989, p. 6). Nowlen (1988) suggested that the acceptance of the update model by professionals is likely the result of the continued presence of the positivist epistemology in professional practice, since professionals explained that they were most comfortable when they saw themselves applying “a research-based technique or protocol” (p. 25) to a problem in their practice.

Within the teacher education literature DiGisi, Nix, Daniles, Gramer, and Cyr (1999) proposed that as an alternative to the continued use of the update model continuing professional education planners consider that just as “students learn best with meaningful curricula, adequate time, appropriate materials, supportive learning groups, and varied ways to show understanding and lingering questions, then we as teachers need those same conditions for providing multifaceted learning experiences”

(p. 263). In a similar perspective, Marceau (2003) recommended that future practice in professional development for adult basic education teachers include “practitioner-driven staff development that models effective adult education practice offers participants a sense of involvement and ownership in a profession that often presents more challenges than opportunities” (p. 73). Hawley and Valli (2001) also supported this shift in perspective and suggested that “professional development should reflect student and teacher needs, be part of overall plan for change, involve teachers in planning and developing opportunities, promote collaboration at the school level, and be evaluated for its impact on teaching practice and student learning” (p. iii). As Chaption (2004) argued, in order for professional development to achieve these goals, it must begin with a planning process that engages both administrators and teachers which was very similar to the staff development forms of continuing professional education begun in the 1930s (Richey, 1957).

Within both the teacher education and continuing adult education literature inquiry-centered continuing professional education experiences has emerged as an alternative model of continued professional education in which:

Participants focus on (1) conducting ‘systematic, intentional inquiry into teaching, learning and administration by practitioners in their own program settings’ (adapted from Cochran-Smit & Lytle, 1991); (2) organizing inquiry as a social and collaborative process; (3) critically analyzing current theory and research from a field-based perspective; and (4) making problematic the social, political, and cultural arrangement that structure literacy learning and teaching in particular contexts. (Belzer, 1998, p. 2)

Where “practitioner inquiry supports the use of particular strategies...the overall goal is to provide a process that encourages practitioners to view their work in new, deeper

and/or more highly nuanced and complex ways” (Belzer, 1998, p. 2). Lytle, Belzer and Reumann (1992) explained that there appeared to have been a shift in the perspectives of some staff development professionals where:

Rather than altering peoples’ practices, beliefs and understandings, or training teachers by transmitting to them predetermined skills and knowledge, the new rhetoric assumes the participants to be active constructors of their own professional practice, acquiring and generating knowledge as members of educational communities rather than primarily as individual actors. (p. 5)

The contrasts between different perspectives on teacher development described by Lytle, Belzer, and Reumann (1992) were based on the theoretical and empirical work of Griffin (1983), Lambert (1990) , Guskey (1986), and Tom (1986). This proposition was substantiated by the work of Lambert (1990) who suggested that the apparent change in perspectives of the early 1990s was the result of the recognition of teachers as adult learners and researchers “learned that cognitive development does not peak in late adolescence, plateau, and then decline” (p. 78) and therefore researchers:

Realized then that teachers had not necessarily given the best years of their lives to preservice. There was hope for a lifetime of learning on the job. Therefore, our modest attempts at inservice – one-shot inspirational speakers or an occasional conference in subject matter – fell far short of addressing our needs for systematic learning about teaching.” (p. 78)

Citing the work of Tom (1986) and Lawrence (1981) Lytle et al. contend that teachers do not need to rely on others for their own staff development, instead “successful programs emphasized teacher responsibility” where “teachers can identify their needs and create appropriate programs” (1992, p. 5).

According to Little's theoretical work (1993), the usefulness of teachers' continuing professional education activities may be considered against six principles regardless of the design model of the program:

- Professional development offers meaningful intellectual, social, and emotional engagement with ideas, with materials, and with colleagues both in and out of teaching.
- Professional development takes explicit account of the contexts of teaching and the experience of teachers.
- Professional development offers support for informed dissent.
- Professional development places classroom practice in the larger contexts of school practice and in the educational career of children.
- Professional development prepares teachers (as well as students and their parents) to employ the techniques and perspectives of inquiry.
- The governance of professional development ensures bureaucratic restraint and a balance between the interests of individuals and the interests of institutions.

(pp. 138 - 139)

Little's principles suggest that the value of teacher professional development goes beyond the need for specific new knowledge to address problems in practice. King and Lawler (2003) explained that "if we have a broad, integrated perspective on professional development, it goes beyond preparing educators to function well in their classrooms and leads to development of the professionals as well" (2003, p. 11). DiGisi et al. (1999) proposed a similar challenge for teacher professional development by suggesting that "good staff development gives teachers tools for the classroom. Outstanding staff development helps teachers ask more compelling questions about our own understanding of teaching" (p. 262). This literature in teacher education is consistent with the adult and continuing education literature and reinforces the

teaching professionals' need for continuing professional education experiences that address the complex challenges of their practice rather than simply providing updates of information regarding teaching pedagogy or content knowledge specific to their curriculum.

While the update model of continuing professional education programs has been criticized for decades, it continues to be the most common form of educational experiences across professions (Lewis et al., 1999; Lowe, Rappolt, Jaglal, & MacDonald, 2007; Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2001). The most striking concern with the model is the continued perception of professionals as individuals who need to be provided with the knowledge and skills from external experts to conduct their professional practice. Other models of program design suggest that program planners need to expand or modify their current practices to support programs that are more focused on the professional learners, the problems of their practice, and how the learners participate and therefore influence the focus of their continued professional education experiences. Professions such as agricultural education need to examine the practical, theoretical, and empirical work that has been done in other fields to understand how professionals are engaged in models of continuing professional education other than technical updates. In particular, agricultural education professionals need to examine the aspects of the inquiry programs that have recently been conducted both in teacher education as well as adult and continuing education to understand how the professionals participate in the planning of their educational experiences and how those experiences influence their professional practices.

Relationships between Providers of Continuing Professional Education Programs

Not only are continuing professional education programs offered as different models, programs may be available from a variety of providers including: employers, educational firms, unions, professional associations, postsecondary institutions, and

universities (Hunt, 1992, p. 6). The relationships between these continuing professional education providers range along a continuum from monopoly and competition to cooperation and collaboration (Cervero, 1988, 1992). Cervero has described a monopoly as the condition in which only one continuing professional education provider exists for a particular profession; while in a competitive situation the providers offer similar programs to the same potential audience with the understanding that they are seeking the same participants. In contrast, cooperation and collaboration described the degree of interaction between two or more providers of a particular program. Cervero described collaboration between two or more providers using Lindsay, Queeney, and Smutz's definition which described providers as "working together jointly and continuously on a project toward a specific goal" (Cervero, 1992, p. 96). Of the forms of interaction between organizations, collaboration was described as the most interdependent and the relationship that necessitated the greatest "resource requirement, formal time commitment, specificity of the goals driving the relationship, and restriction of each partner's organizational autonomy" (Queeney, 1997, p. 11). Yet, a majority of the continuing professional education programs are "provided through some sort of collaboration between two or more institutions" (Cervero, 2000, p. 10). Based on the work of Anderson, Barrick, and Hughes (1992) as well as Pals and Crawford (1980), there are a limited number of providers specifically within the agricultural education content area and these groups may work through some form of collaboration however, the relationships between providers and their resulting influence on the continuing professional education programs in agricultural education remain unexamined.

The need for collaboration between continuing professional education program providers has been recognized for a number of years (Houle, 1980; Stern & Queeney,

1992). In particular a U.S. Department of Education panel for continuing professional education suggested that the:

Exponential expansion of technical knowledge and growing concern with professional competence have heightened the sense of disorder within continuing professional education and underscored the importance of interaction and collaborative programming among higher education, the professions, and controllers of the workplace. (Stern & Queeney, 1992, p. 19)

However, if these collaborating partnerships are to be developed, Cervero (2000) has stated that they must be assembled with the understanding that the resulting relationship is “fundamentally a political process in which costs and benefits must be clearly weighed, including those involving the organizational agendas other than those connected to the continuing education program” (p. 11). The resulting collaboration will occur, not because it is simply a good thing to do, but from an “understanding of the goals to be achieved by the partnership, from a clear recognition of the benefits to be gained by each institution, and from the contribution of equivalent resources by each partner” (Cervero, 2000, p. 11).

Unfortunately there is always a struggle between the “learning agenda and the political economic agenda” (Cervero, 2000, p. 10) among program partners. Within the teacher education literature, Little (1993) expressed concern that historically university-school collaborations have struggled to effectively provide professional development programs because of the “difficulty [of] overcoming long-standing asymmetries in status, power, and resources” (p. 136). Little has provided examples of collaborative partnerships that have been successful in developing programs for schools where the “structure of leadership spans groups and institutions ... to permeate organizational boundaries” (p. 136). Within these collaborative partnerships

“organizational boundaries are further blurred by the development of cross-institutional roles” (p. 136). Unfortunately, “these cross-institutional roles are still small in number, low in visibility, modest in institutional salience, and perhaps too dependent on individual will” (p. 136). Cervero (2000) has suggested that those involved in program partnerships need to ask the question, “Who’s in charge?” (p. 10) when it comes to collaborative continuing education programs since the “governance issue is always negotiated in partnerships, and the central issues typically revolve around who controls the content of the program and how profits and losses will be shared” (p. 10). Partnerships need to be based on established goals and each partner “must have something to contribute to the endeavor, and agree to contribute it” (Queeney, 1997, p. 5).

While this literature examined the relationships between partners for continuing professional education programs, little work appears to have been done to understand the role of continuing professional education participants in the relationships with the various program providers. Specifically, further work needs be done to examine how the different relationships made explicate by Cervero (2000) influenced participation of learners in the program planning work and therefore the influence of the participants on the programs that resulted from the planning work. Like a majority of the continued professional education programs offered through partnerships between different providers (Cervero, 2000) agricultural education program providers have worked collaboratively (Anderson et al., 1992; Pals & Crawford, 1980) to provide educational opportunities to agriculture teachers; however, these studies also neglected to examine the involvement of the teachers in the collaborative planning relationships.

Participation of Teachers

While schools have made efforts in recent years to shift the decision-making authority from strictly administratively driven structures to efforts that reflect shared decision making practices, there still exists “patterns of organizational management that take decision making away from teachers and that impose curricula and methods on teachers [that] are a reflection of the same patterns of domination and powerlessness that characterize student-teacher relationships” (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 10). In his examination of the complexity of power dynamics within schools Kreisberg (1992) drew heavily on the work of Dewey and Freire to introduce his concerns with traditional educational practices in which teachers:

Occupy a paradoxical place in the web of institutional and ideological domination in schools. Although they are central figures of authority and control in the classroom, in the larger hierarchy of the educational bureaucracy they are remarkably isolated and often strikingly powerless. (p. 9)

In his empirical work Blasé (1991) found that “teachers seem to operate quite individually...in their political relations with principals” and “there was little evidence of collective consciousness” (p. 377) from which to initiate change in these practices. Marshall and Scribner (1991) concurred with this observation and further emphasized that the complexity of school based power structures “result not only from the daily pressures of political life within the school, but also from messages and perceived threats beyond the schoolhouse walls” (p. 349). In a similar fashion the results of the Johnson-Bailey and Cervero study “showed the many complex ways in which the power relations in the larger society are played out in adult education classrooms and how they directly influence the teaching and learning process” (1998, p. 397). As a result, Johnson-Bailey and Cervero’s recommendations included a call for additional

work to “better understand how societal power relations affect teaching and learning efforts and what responses educators can make to negotiate these issues” (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998, p. 398).

Kreisberg proposed that “we must find new modes of relationships which are not based on domination and submission and are not organized into hierarchies of the powerful and powerless” (1992, p. 18) and instead “identify and explore, in theory and experience, forms of relationships that can nourish self and social empowerment” (p. 18). In his work Kreisberg (1992) suggested an alternative perspective of power as not *power over* but *power with*. Kreisberg argued that the traditional definition of power as a relationship of domination or power over is very limiting. Instead, Kreisberg took direction from Jean Baker Miller who defined power as the “capacity to implement” (as cited in Kreisberg, 1992, p. 63) where “Miller’s definition has within it the possibility of dominating power, but it also allows for co-agency” (p.63). Building on Miller’s theme of human development as “agency-in-community” Kreisberg proposed that “in its healthiest expression agency-in-community is manifest when individuals support and enhance one another’s empathic, generative, and assertive qualities” (p. 64). Kreisberg’s vision for continuing professional education experiences in which teachers and other stakeholders engaged work that reflected “agency-in-community” and relationships of power which may be exhibited in practitioner inquiry based programs where:

The work of the (practitioner inquiry) groups and individuals grows out of the day-to-day realities, needs and interests of participants; they empower practitioners to take control of their own learning and encourage them to take responsibility for making change; and they generate new knowledge for the field (Lytle, Belzer, Cantafio and Reumann, unpublished manuscript). (Belzer, 1998, p. 2)

In her work with practitioner inquiry based continuing professional education programs with adult literacy educators, Drennon emphasized that “at the core of the practitioner inquiry movement are democratic beliefs that teachers, program administrators, and other practitioners should have a significant voice in determining how the work of literacy education is carried out” (2002, p. 61). While this work in inquiry based continued professional education programs as well as others (Belzer, 1998, 2003, 2005; Lytle et al., 1992; Lytle, Belzer, & Reumann, 1993), repositions teachers as central to the planning work as empowered participants, additional studies of teacher participation in planning of other program models must be added to the program planning literature.

Research in Agriculture Teacher Continuing Professional Education

The current research studies in agricultural education provide limited guidance for those individuals in the profession who are responsible for the design of continued professional education programs. The area of research that appears to dominate the literature in agricultural education is the assessment of teachers’ perceived inservice program topic interests. An extensive examination of the *Journal of Agricultural Education*, the *Journal of Vocational Education Research* (now Career and Technical Education Research), and the *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education* (now the Journal of Career and Technical Education) was conducted to identify those studies and reports associated with professional development. Those three publications represent all of the significant journals of direct interest to the field of school-based agricultural education. Since 1980 fifteen articles have been published (Barrick et al., 1983; Birkenholz & Harbstreit, 1987; Claycomb & Petty, 1983; Dormody & Torres, 2002; Duncan et al., 2006; Edwards & Briers, 1999; Elbert & Baggett, 2003; Garton & Chung, 1996, 1997; Joerger, 2002; Kotrlik et al., 2000; Layfield & Dobbins, 2002; Newman & Johnson, 1994; Roberts & Dyer, 2004; Ruhland & Bremer, 2002) that

identify the self-reported technical and pedagogical content topic needs of both beginning and experienced secondary agriculture teachers. The current needs assessment studies in the agricultural education literature imply that the profession has continued to utilize the technical update model however, as will be explained in a later section, the continuing professional education practices within the profession have begun to include an examination of the competencies needed for the professional practice of secondary agricultural educators. For example, the most recent needs assessment study by Duncan et al. (2006) justifies the needs assessment work as a means of “improving university agricultural teacher education curricula and statewide continuing education programs” by “assessing the needs of current practitioners of the ‘agriculture teaching’ craft” to assist “providers of agricultural education preparation” in their efforts to “re-evaluate the content they distribute to pre-service and current agriculture teachers” (p. 24). This study specifically investigated teachers’ perceptions of the importance of specific competencies for success in their work as well as the teachers’ perception of their own mastery of each competency. While these studies provide some indication that the professional community may be engaging in continued professional education programs that utilize Nowlen’s (1988) competency model, it remains unclear how teachers are participating in the educational experiences and how those experiences are different than those of teachers in an update modeled program. Since the studies reported in the formal literature may represent only a small portion of the agricultural education continuing professional education programs, it is not possible to determine if any of the other continuing professional education models are utilized.

Other areas of research have included a limited number of inservice program evaluations (Brookes & Williams, 2001; Edwards & Briers, 2002; Eisenman, Hill, Bailey, & Dickison, 2003; Gamon & Burton, 1987; Nesbitt & Mundt, 1993; Trede,

Russell, & Miller, 1985), several investigative discussions surrounding the responsibilities of planning and conducting inservice programs (Anderson et al., 1992; Pals & Crawford, 1980) and an inquiry into where agriculture teachers acquire their professional competencies (Findlay, 1992). While this area of study indicated an effort to conduct research relevant to concerns regarding the practice of secondary agricultural education, a critical examination of the literature revealed that none of the reported agricultural education studies of continuing professional education provide theoretically based planning models that may be useful guides to those individuals charged with leading professional development program planning efforts for their respective communities of teachers.

Research Paradigm in Agricultural Education

Much of the research in agricultural education and career and technical education does not clearly define itself as grounded in a particular research paradigm. Some studies clearly indicate a positivist research paradigm and utilize experimental or quasi-experimental designs to investigate hypotheses while other studies include descriptive surveys of a sample or census in small populations. Like the field of counseling psychology (Haverkamp, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2005), researchers in agricultural education professional development have been slow to adopt a broader choice of research methodologies. While this is not to imply that quantitative methods should be abandoned, it may suggest that agricultural education researchers need to utilize a broader range of methodologies to expand the options available to address new research questions regarding continuing professional education. Haverkamp, Morrow, and Ponterotto (2005) suggested that “methodological pluralism will also enhance the legitimacy of our empirical finding to major community and government stakeholders” (p. 214). Polkinghorne (2005) encouraged the use of qualitative methods when studying human interactions since they are, “specifically constructed to

take account of the particular characteristics of human experience and facilitate the investigation of experience,” (p. 138) like those observed in teacher professional development programs. Polkinghorne went on to explain that human experience “has a vertical depth, and methods of data gathering, such as short-answer questionnaires with Likert-type scales that only gather surface information, and are inadequate to capture the richness and fullness of an experience” (p. 138).

According to Hillison (1990), while the career and technical education research journals reflect limited evidence of pragmatism, the field of career and technical (vocational) education has been dominated by professionals whose teaching practice is grounded in pragmatism and “who believe in learning by doing, who believe in skill competence, who believe in using all three educational domains,...and who believe in practical research” (p. 1), but unfortunately agricultural education researchers continue to use limited methodological approaches when addressing their research questions. In other words, agricultural teacher educators’ paradigm of teaching practice is disconnected from their research paradigms. Hillison suggested that this disconnect may contribute to the “gap between research theory and classroom application” (1990, p. 6) and discourages classroom teachers from becoming engaged in research or the “implementation of research findings” (p. 7) given the current research methods. In terms of career and technical education professional development, Hillison’s (1990) recommendations would suggest that a shift in research paradigms and related methodologies is necessary for improving the connection between the theories and practices of professional development planning.

Relevant Teacher Education Program Planning

Since 1980 two studies have been published in the area of continuing professional education program planning in career and technical education. The first study, conducted by Pals and Crawford (1980), focused on investigating the perceived

roles and responsibilities of the multiple agricultural education agencies for providing inservice education programs in Iowa. The agencies included in the study were: vocational agriculture instructors, agricultural industry personnel, local school district administrators, Iowa State University College of Agriculture department heads, area education agency professional development specialist, area Extension directors, Iowa State University state Extension specialists, and area community/technical college agriculture department heads. The results included only a limited report of the analyses of variance test results for a portion of the groups in the study. The studies did not appear to investigate the relationships among the providers.

In the second study of program planning (Anderson et al., 1992) the researchers found evidence that for all components of the career and technical education community (secondary teachers, secondary school administrators, teacher educators, state education department staff, postsecondary faculty, and postsecondary administration) the perception was that continuing professional education program planning was the primary responsibility of teacher educators and state education department staff. In the Anderson et al. (1992) study a survey instrument was designed by the researchers based on their professional development program planning experience and administered to all members of the vocational education community members in Idaho. The instrument addressed program planning responsibilities and used scaled responses to determine the perceived level of responsibility of each group for professional development activities.

Traditional teacher continuing professional education programs have been single day activities that presented information in lecture or workshop format. More recent studies indicate that effective teacher professional development must be long-term and integrated into the teachers' daily routine (Choy & Chen, 1998). Studies of professional development in agricultural education suggest that current practices in

New York State are consistent with those in other parts of the country where professional development programs are limited to stand alone conferences intended to provide content updates to practitioners (Duncan et al., 2006; Edwards & Briers, 1999; Garton & Chung, 1996, 1997; Joerger, 2002; Layfield & Dobbins, 2002; Mundt & Connors, 1999). While these studies provided professional development program planners with lists of content topics, they neglected to explain how the results of the needs assessments were used in the program planning work, who determined which of the needs would be addressed by the program, or how the program was expected to influence the teachers' practice. The omission of a discussion of the planning activities is not surprising since the profession's traditions assume that the planning will be conducted by university faculty or state level leaders. For example, the prominence of state education staff and university faculty as leaders in professional development planning is evident in a study of the Idaho agricultural education community where Anderson, Barrick, and Hughes (Anderson et al., 1992) found that "secondary administrators, vocational teachers, vocational teacher educators and state staff perceive that vocational teacher educators have major or primary coordination and delivery responsibilities for all components of a state-wide comprehensive professional development program" (p. 46). In a more recent work Joerger, Spindler, and Nelson (2004) emphasized the significance of teachers in continuing professional education planning by recommending that, "teachers should be encouraged to use their own findings to plan a personal professional development plan by year" (p. 27) but still assumed that state education department staff and university faculty would continue to serve as the program planners for any structured state-level programs.

The data analysis within the ten needs assessment studies that utilized the Borich (1980) instrument model all resulted in prioritized lists of the technical content and program management topics using the mean weighted discrepancy scales of the

teaching competencies. Unfortunately the agricultural education studies do not include a clear definition of what is meant by the term competency, however it might be inferred from this example from Joerger's work where "the self-reporting instrument was designed to assess the level of importance and competence of 59 professional teaching competencies representing four categories of professional development" (2002, p. 13) that the researchers are loosely using the term to equate to the teacher's self-reported, perceived level of knowledge. An example of the five highest rated competencies in technical agriculture content knowledge, knowledge of teaching and learning, and knowledge of program management content reported in one study include:

- Technical Content Knowledge
 - Integrating current advances in agriculture technology into the curriculum
 - Teaching skills and concepts in electricity
 - Teaching skills and concepts in small animal care and veterinary technology
 - Teaching skills and concepts in animal biotechnology
 - Teachings skills and concepts in aquaculture (Duncan et al., 2006, p. 29)
- Teaching and Learning
 - Motivating students to learn
 - Teaching students to think critically and creatively
 - Managing student behavior problems
 - Teaching learning disabled students
 - Teaching students problem-solving and decision making skills (p. 30)
- Program Management Knowledge

- Providing guidance to students interested in post-secondary education in the food,
- fiber and natural resource industries
- Preparing FFA proficiency award applications
- Preparing FFA degree applications
- Developing SAE opportunities for students (p. 31)

Based on these results, the researchers' recommendations in the studies were focused on determining which topics would be most appropriate to include in future continuing professional education programs. Garton and Chung (1996) reported that teachers preferred to receive inservice education "through workshops ranging from two to three hours (76%), at the summer vocational teacher conference (76%), and by participating in district continuing professional education courses (57%)" and "few of the beginning teachers indicated they would choose to receive inservice education through videotape (30%) or interactive television (24%)" (p. 56). This report gave no indication that any professional development program formats, other than the technical update inservice model, were provided as optional responses to the instrument question(s).

This focus on technical update programs as a single continuing professional education model is prevalent in the recommendation sections of the other needs assessment studies where suggestions included replication of the needs assessment studies in other states (Layfield & Dobbins, 2002; Roberts & Dyer, 2004) and with different cohorts of agricultural education teachers (Joerger, 2002). With his recommendation for replication of the needs assessment study, Joerger (2002) proposed that researchers replicate the needs assessment study with each cohort of beginning teachers since there may have been differences in inservice needs within the cohort based on "backgrounds and experiences of beginning teachers, changing

demand in local schools or non-traditional curricula, and teacher setting change” (p. 22). Further, Joerger reported that differences in needs appeared to occur between the cohorts of new teachers suggesting that program providers would need to understand why the differences occurred in order to meet these different needs with appropriate inservice programs. This is consistent with work that was done earlier in continuing professional education (Houle, 1980). Finally, Joerger recommended that additional studies be pursued to investigate and test a “contemporary list of professional competencies that can be used as a base for assessing the competence and inservice education needs of beginning agriculture teachers” (p. 22).

The recommendations put forth by the researchers in the five needs assessment studies with researcher developed instruments were similar to those discussed in the needs assessment studies reported earlier. Kotrlik et al. (2000) observed that the teachers’ responses in their study indicated a trend of increased self-directed learning and a decrease in the reliance of teachers on universities in the area of microcomputer related professional development. Kotrlik et al. (2000) expressed a concern with the decrease in participation in university based technology related workshops or courses and recommended that university faculty work with teachers to modify the course offerings to better meet the teachers’ inservice needs. Once again this recommendation suggested the assumption that the standard continuing professional education model is the university directed technical update. In contrast, Birkenholz and Harbstreit (1987) recommended that “individualized inservice activities and assistance may be more appropriate to meet the needs of beginning teachers,” (p. 47).

In addition to the survey based studies of teacher continuing professional education needs, Ruhland and Bremer (2002) reported needs assessment findings based on interviews conducted with novice career and technical education teachers as part of a larger research project funded by the *National Research Center for Career*

and Technical Education. The interview participants were derived from the group of teachers who submitted completed surveys in the first phase of a larger study. The participants in the interview portion of the study were self-selected from the group of survey responders. The study sample came from the teacher populations of only 28 states that provided participant information. Although the participant sampling methods limited the generalizability of their research findings, Ruhland and Bremer (2002) found that due to the diversity in teachers prior knowledge and experience “a one-size-fits-all professional development program will likely not meet the needs of most individuals in this diverse group” (p. 28). Instead Ruhland and Bremer recommend that “a wide range of professional development opportunities for all teachers” (p. 29) be developed so that teachers could select those activities that would be most beneficial to them and their practice. The researchers did not suggest planning strategies that could be used to develop such programs.

The current study examined the continuing professional education planning practices of the New York State agricultural education planning group that reflected a shift from the university driven technical update model of continuing professional education work to a program model that exhibited aspects of Nowlen’s (1988) performance model where continuing professional education experiences were designed through partnerships between professional organizations, individual professionals, and universities. In contrast to the previous agricultural education professional development research which focused on identifying teacher continuing professional education topic needs and assumed that the program planning and implementation was to be led by state agricultural education staff, this study examined the teacher-lead planning process for the annual state-wide agricultural education teachers continuing professional education program. In particular this study focused on the teacher participation in the planning process.

Summary

This chapter has provided a review of the literature associated with the continuing professional education literature as it relates to program planning, the teacher continuing professional education providers, adult education program planning, and research design. Two points seem to be critical to the study of teacher participation in the planning of continuing professional education programs in agricultural education. First, the agricultural education literature provides little, if any, evidence of teacher participation in continuing professional education program planning beyond the completion of needs assessment surveys. In contrast, studies published in agricultural education within the last 25 years have emphasized the role of university faculty and state staff as program providers, with an implied focus on the technical update program model. Second, unlike the literature in continuing professional education, the agricultural education literature provides no analysis or discussion of how multiple providers of educational programs interact with each other to plan and conduct programs for teachers or how these interactions influence the design and focus of the programs.

In contrast to the theoretical foundation of the current continuing professional education studies in agricultural education, this study drew upon a contemporary adult education program planning theory (Cervero & Wilson, 2006) as the lens through which the teacher participation in the continuing professional education program planning was examined. Utilizing this theory the researcher focused on how teachers interacted with their peers and others to influence the educational program's educational, management and political objectives while designing and implementing a professional education experience for themselves as well as their peers. In particular, this theory provided guidance for the researcher to examination of the relationships

between teachers and others at the planning table, especially as those relationships contributed to the negotiation of particular aspects of the educational program.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine learner participation in the planning of continuing professional education. The site and audience for investigating learner involvement was the planning of an annual continuing professional education program for New York State teachers of agricultural education. Four major questions guided this study:

1. How do agriculture teachers participate in the planning of their continuing professional education programs?
2. Why do teachers participate in the continuing professional education program planning process?
3. How do the agricultural education teachers influence the planning group decisions regarding the continuing professional education program planning activities and design?
4. How does the participation of teachers in the continuing professional education program planning group influence their practice and their profession?

Rationale for a Qualitative Case Study Design

This was a descriptive single-case study (Yin, 2003) of eight agricultural education teachers who participated in their professional association executive board. This Board was responsible for planning an annual state-wide continuing professional education program. Each of the individual teachers in the case served as a unit of analysis. A panel of continuing professional education professionals appointed by the U.S. Department of Education has recommended case studies be conducted within the different professions to examine how the individual professions “approach continuing professional education for their members” (Hunt, 1992, p. 8). This specific case did not propose to represent the character of all agricultural education continuing

professional education practices across the country. Rather, it was intended to examine teacher participation in one continuing professional education planning group which included collaborative partnerships among multiple agencies that provided continuing professional education programs for the members of the state agricultural education profession. The case-study allowed the researcher to examine the “contextual conditions” (Yin, 2003, p. 13) within the planning group and the influence those conditions had on the participation of the teachers. The case study called for “multiple sources of evidence” (Yin, 2003, p. 14) which were gathered using multiple in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis in an effort to provide a triangulation of evidence in the data analysis. A critical component of the case study design was the development of a set of *a priori* propositions based on the research questions and the related literature. These propositions were used to guide both the data collection and analysis processes (Yin, 2003).

The Research Design

The case selected as the context of the study was the group of eight teachers who served on the New York Association of Agricultural Educators (NYAAE) Executive Board and the planning committee responsible for preparing the 2008 New York State agricultural education teacher summer professional inservice conference. In addition to the eight agriculture teachers The Board also included seven state leaders and other stakeholders, including state staff members. The researcher used multiple means of data collection associated with case studies including: 1.) formal in-depth interviews with each teacher, 2.) observation of the Board and committee meetings, and 3.) qualitative document analysis (Yin, 2003) as well as the facilitation of a 4.) a single focus group that provided a member check (Patton, 2002) of the draft themes developed in the preliminary data analysis. For a complete summary of the steps involved in the data collection, see Table 1. The data collection process began

on October 13, 2007 with the initial NYAAE Board meeting of the entire group of stakeholders and ended with the planning committee meeting on January 26, 2008 in which the group discussed the final list of workshop topics that would be included in the continuing professional education program format.

Table 1: Data Collection Time-Line

Date	Data Collection Activity
October 1, 2007	Initial contact with the group of teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requested the group's participation through the president. • Communicated with the other members of the Board to inform them of the plans to conduct the study of the teachers' participation in the continuing professional education planning work.
October 1, 2007	Contacted the recent past president of the group to request his participation in the pilot interview on October 13, 2007
October 5, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent the letter of invitation via email to each of the teachers requested to participate in the case-study. • Sent a letter via email to the other members of the Board who would be participating in the Board and committee meetings that would be observed as part of the study.
October 13, 2007	Pilot tested the interview protocols (45 minutes)
October 13, 2007	NYAAE Executive Board meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented the information regarding the study to the teacher participants. • The 117 minute meeting was observed and recorded. • Approximately 45 minutes was devoted to the discussion of the continuing professional education program planning work and therefore transcribed. • The remaining 72 minutes of the meeting were not transcribed.
October 13, 2007	Initial planning committee meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 90 minute meeting was observed, recorded and transcribed. • The purpose of the meeting was to determine the conference location and begin discussion of the registration fee.

Table 1: Continued

October 19, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 1 with President (60 minutes)
October 19, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 1 with Treasurer (50 minutes)
October 26, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 1 with Region Three Representative (65 minutes)
October 26, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 1 with Past President (65 minutes)
October 29, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 1 with Region One Representative (40 minutes)
October 29, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 1 with President Elect (65 minutes)
November 8, 2007	<p>Planning committee conference call.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 35 minute call was observed and recorded by written notes. • During this call participants discussed the registration fee.
November 12, 2007	<p>Planning committee conference call.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This 55 minute call was not observed by the researcher. Instead the meeting notes and comments from participants were collected after the call. • Approximately 25 minutes of the call was devoted to the discussion of the planning work. • During the call the group made the final decision on the registration fee.
November 17, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 1 with Region Two Representative (40 minutes)
November 17, 2007	<p>Planning committee meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 88 minute meeting was observed, recorded, and transcribed. • During the meeting the group began the discussion of the workshop topics.
November 18, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 1 with Secretary (40 minutes)
December 3, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 2 with President (75 minutes)
December 3, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 2 with Treasurer (30 minutes)
December 3, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 2 with Region Three Representative (25 minutes)
December 12, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 2 with President Elect (25 minutes)

Table 1: Continued

December 12, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 2 with Region One Representative (30 minutes)
December 14, 2007	Planning committee meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 122 minute meeting was observed and recorded. • Approximately 60 minutes was devoted to the discussion of the planning work and therefore transcribed. The group discussed the workshops the teachers participated in at the national agricultural education convention and determined those that could be included in the New York program. • The remaining 52 minutes were spent discussing a state agricultural education assessment project.
December 14, 2007	Interview Round 1, Part 2 with Past President (20 minutes)
January 11, 2008	Interview Round 1, Part 2 with Region Two Representative (20 minutes)
January 12, 2008	Interview Round 1, Part 2 with Secretary (20 minutes)
January 12, 2008	Requested a meeting to conduct the round two interviews with each of the three teachers with five or more years of experience on the board.
January 18, 2008	Interview Round 2 with President (50 minutes)
January 19, 2008	Interview Round 2 with Secretary (30 minutes)
January 25, 2008	Interview Round 2 with Past President (30 minutes)
January 26, 2008	Planning committee meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 90 minute meeting was observed, recorded and transcribed. • During the meeting the group finalized the workshops topics the group wanted to include in the program.
January 26, 2008	The researcher facilitated the single 55 minute focus group with the teachers who participated in the study.

Preliminary work

To assist with the development of the observation protocols and interview guides, the researcher developed an *a priori* set of propositions (Table 2). The purpose of the propositions was to “direct attention to something that should be examined within the scope of study” (Yin, 2003, p. 22).

Table 2: *a priori* Propositions

Proposition	Supporting Literature	Research Questions
The participation of learners is integral to the work of continuing professional education program planning.	Planning is a social activity whereby people construct educational programs by negotiating personal, organizational, and social interest in contexts marked by socially structure relationships of power. (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do agriculture teachers describe their participation in the planning of the continuing professional education program? 2. Why do teachers participate in the continuing professional education program planning process?
The communication dynamics within a group influences the ability of individuals to participate in group discussions and decisions.	The ability of individuals to represent their ideas and perspectives within a group is influenced by the power they possess through the relationships that exist between them and others in the group. (Forester, 1989; Kreisberg, 1992)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do agriculture teachers describe their participation in the planning of the continuing professional education program? 2. Why do teachers participate in the continuing professional education program planning process?

Table 2: Continued

<p>The relationships between partner groups responsible for continuing professional education programs will influence how the individuals representing each group participate in the program planning work.</p>	<p>Different groups or organizations that provide continuing professional education programs do so through established relationships influence how they participate in the planning work and how their agendas influence the educational program (Cervero, 2000; Queeney, 1997)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do agriculture teachers describe their participation in the planning of the continuing professional education program? 2. Why do teachers participate in the continuing professional education program planning process?
<p>Continuing professional education programs are influenced by the learners who participate in the program planning.</p>	<p>“Planning is a social activity whereby people construct educational programs by negotiating personal, organizational, and social interest in contexts marked by socially structured relationships of power.” (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. How do the agricultural education teachers perceive that they influence the planning group decisions regarding the continuing professional education program planning activities and design?
<p>Participation in continuing professional education program planning influences the professional practices of the learners.</p>	<p>Continuing professional education programs need to reflect the problems professionals must address in their practice. (Cervero, 1988, 2000; Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Houle, 1980)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. How do the teachers in the planning group perceive that their participation in the continuing professional education program planning influence their professional practice and their profession?

Table 2: Continued

Continuing professional education programs have an influence on the professional community they are designed to serve.	Continuing professional education programs, while they influence the practice of individual professionals they in turn influence the profession as a whole. (Noblit, Berry, & Dempsey, 1991)	4. How do the teachers in the planning group perceive that their participation in the continuing professional education program planning influence their professional practice and their profession?
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The table in Appendix A illustrates how these propositions aligned with the series of interview questions in the protocols for the initial round one (Appendix B) and round two (Appendix C) interview guides as well as the development of the observation protocol (Appendix D) for the Board and planning committee meetings.

Pilot testing

The interview guides (Appendix B and C) for both the round one and round two interviews were pilot tested with the most recent past president of the agriculture teachers' association. This individual had recently left the Board at the conclusion of his tenure as an officer. He had served in the association executive committee for nine years, and left only when his tenure as an officer was completed. The pilot test of the interview protocols occurred one week before the first round one interview and was one hour and thirty minutes in length. At the conclusion of the pilot interview the researcher conducted a brief, 30 minute interview with the past-president regarding his experience in the pilot test of interview protocol. The interview guides were modified based on the feedback from the interviewee and the clarifications to the interview items that were requested by the interviewee and noted by the researcher during the pilot test. These modifications included minor rewording of items and the addition of items: III: c & d., IV: a. i, ii, & iii in the Round One Interview Guide (Appendix B).

Making Initial Contact with the Case Study Group

On October 1, 2007 initial contact was made with the president of the agriculture teachers' association, staff in the Agricultural Education Outreach project, the director of the Agriculture Tech Prep project, the agricultural education representative at the State Education Department, and the two university faculty who served on the Board. Each of these individuals was given copies of the letters for the round one and two interviews, the meeting observations, and the preliminary focus group protocol. All of the individuals except the association president were also given copies of the draft interview guides for their review. Finally, a general overview of the study and the individual data collection techniques were provided to the entire Board at their first meeting.

Sampling and Selection of Participants

The purposeful sample (Patton, 2002) of teachers selected for this case study was the group of individuals who were active in the continuing professional education program planning work through their involvement in the New York State Association of Agricultural Educators (NYAAE). This group was chosen because they were expected to be an "information rich" (Patton, 2002, p. 231) group that deviated from those individuals identified as the planners in the agricultural education continuing professional education program planning literature (Anderson et al., 1992; Duncan et al., 2006; Pals & Crawford, 1980) where university faculty and state staff were reported to conduct the planning work. All of the teachers were asked to participate in the interviews and the focus group. The teachers were also asked to be observed as part of the planning meetings and related planning activities which included emails and conference calls.

The case study group included eight teachers who were currently serving as the executive officers for NYAAE. The NYAAE officers were elected by their peers in

the state agricultural education community to serve as: president, president-elect, past-president, treasurer, secretary, and three regional representatives. The NYAAE executive officers come from the secondary agricultural education professional community listed in the New York Secondary Agricultural Education Teacher Directory (New York Agricultural Education Outreach, 2006). This community was 75 % male and 96 % white. Ninety-two percent of the agricultural educators taught in rural communities.

The teachers in the study group included:

- As president, a male teacher with 27 years of teaching experience, more than five years of experience on the Board, and referred to hereafter by the pseudonym Andrew.
- As past-president, a female teacher with eight years of teaching experience, more than five years of experience on the NYAAE Board, and referred to hereafter by the pseudonym Theresa.
- As president elect, a female teacher with 20 years of teaching experience who was in her first year serving on the Board but was an individual who served as president more than ten years ago and referred to hereafter by the pseudonym Mary.
- As secretary, a female teacher with 21 years of teaching experience, with five years of experience on the Board, and referred to hereafter by the pseudonym Christine.
- As treasurer, a female teacher with 14 years of teaching experience, three years of experience on the Board, and referred to hereafter by the pseudonym Stephanie.
- As regional representative, a female with six years of teaching experience, two year of experience on the Board, and referred to hereafter as Elizabeth.

- A regional representative, a female with seven years of teaching experience, one year of experience on the Board, and referred to hereafter by the pseudonym Jean.
- A regional representative, a male with seven years of teaching experience, two years of experience on the Board, and referred to hereafter by the pseudonym Thomas.

Other members of the NYAAE Board who were not included in the case study were:

- Three Agricultural Education Outreach program staff members employed by Cornell University. One of the agricultural education outreach staff members was the primary planner for the annual summer conference and the second was new to his position at the beginning of this study. The third agricultural education outreach staff person was the supervisor for the Cornell University Agricultural Education and Outreach program and oversaw the financial activities, including funds designated for continuing professional education activities. This person left his position shortly after the study began and was absent from all of the meetings after the NYAAE Board meeting on October 13, 2007.
- The New York State Education Department (NYSED) staff person responsible for agricultural education programs. The NYSED has legal authority and responsibility to provide state oversight for agricultural education programs, including the annual professional development conference.
- One agricultural science education faculty member from the Department of Education at Cornell University.
- One agricultural education faculty member from the State University of New York at Oswego, Department of Vocational and Technical Education.

- The Director of the New York State Ag Tech-Prep program. The Director of the New York State Ag Tech-Prep program has served in that role and assisted teachers with the planning and funding of continuing professional education activities for 18 years.

Together with the teachers, these individuals conducted the agricultural education continuing professional education program planning as the NYAAE Board and provided a “substantial contribution to filling out the structure and character of the experience under investigation,” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 139) in this descriptive case study.

Data Collection

In this study, data were collected through the review of the documents that were related to the continuing professional education program planning activities. Specific documents (Appendix E) were requested and selected in the initial phases of the research and continued to be collected throughout the study as relevant items were identified during the NYAAE Board meeting, planning committee meetings, and the individual interviews. Observations were made of the NYAAE Board meeting as well as the meetings of the planning committee appointed by the Board. These observations were audio-recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. The interviews for round one began after the observation of the NYAAE Board meeting. The round two interviews occurred one to two weeks prior to the final meeting observation. The focus group meeting was conducted after the planning committee meeting on January 26, 2008. The complete time-line of the data collecting activities was provided in Table 1.

Content Analysis

Prior to observing the first planning meeting of the NYAAE Board and then throughout the duration of the case study, the researcher collected documents and

archived records related to the activities of the NYAAE Board and planning committee (Appendix E). Materials that were collected included documents from the Agricultural Education Outreach website, previous conference planning materials and evaluations, archived staff records from earlier planning meetings for previous conferences, NYAAE archived meeting minutes, as well as Agricultural Education Outreach annual program reports. As Lofland et al. (2006) have suggested, these archival records “significantly enrich field studies, although they have considerable potential for error and bias” (p. 89) and therefore could not be “accepted as literal recordings of events that have taken place” (Yin, 2003, p. 87). Instead, as Yin recommended, these documents served the case study by corroborating information from other sources and providing a source for additional inferences that were pursued during the two rounds of interviews. Since these documents were not written specifically for this study they were critically reviewed to determine their original purpose (Yin, 2003) and application to the case study.

Observations of the Group Meetings

The study participants were sent an email letter on October 5, 2007 (Appendix F) explaining the researcher’s request to observe the Board and planning committee meetings. Formal observations (Yin, 2003) were conducted during each of the planning meetings, during conference calls, and by the inclusion of the researcher in all email exchanges that took place in between the formal group meetings. Throughout the study the researcher maintained a role of participant observer (Spradley, 1980), allowing the planning group members to know that they are being observed. The meeting observations were audio-recorded while the conference calls were recorded by hand for later transcription, coding and analysis. All email and written communications were also coded and analyzed. The researcher recorded field notes during all observations and composed research memos (Spradley, 1980) to

capture her reflections and reactions to the events she experienced. Each of the participants (teachers, state staff, and other leaders) was given a consent form (Appendix G) to review and sign at the beginning of the first NYAAE Board meeting and a second copy of the consent form for his or her files. The researcher reviewed this form with the participants and answered any questions they had regarding the observations and the research project. The observations also provided contextual references (Spradley, 1980) which were helpful points for questions during the interviews. These observations were planned, focused (Spradley, 1980) and guided by observation protocols (Yin, 2003) that were based on the study questions and propositions.

Two Rounds of Interviews

A primary data source in this descriptive case study was a series of in-depth interviews with the teacher members of the NYAAE Board (Table 3). The interviews were designed to surface deep, authentic experiences, and to provide respondents the space to offer their opinions and reflective insights (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001) into their work in the continued professional education program planning . As members of the agricultural education planning group and as experienced teachers, these respondents were able to assist the researcher in understanding the process they experienced during the planning of the continuing professional education program.

Table 3: Interview Descriptions

Interviewee	Years of Service on Board	Previously Served on Planning Committee	Round I Parts I & II	Round II	Total Duration of Interviews
President (Andrew)	7	X	60 + 75 min.	50 min.	185 min.
Past Pres. (Theresa)	6	X	65 + 20 min.	30 min.	115 min.

Table 3: Continued

Pres. Elect (Mary)	1		65 + 25 min.		90 min.
Treasurer (Christine)	3		50 + 30 min.		80 min.
Secretary (Stephanie)	15+		40 + 20 min.	30 min.	90 min.
Region One Representative (Elizabeth)	2		40 + 30 min.		70 min.
Region Two Representative (Jean)	1	X	40 + 20 min.		60 min.
Region Three Representative (Thomas)	2	X	65 + 25 min.		90 min.
Totals			16 interviews 670 min.	3 interviews 110 min.	780 min. 13 hrs.

Round One Interviews. At the conclusion of the October Board meeting each of the participants was given a letter (Appendix H) explaining the round one, part one interviews. The first round of interviews involved each of the eight teachers on the NYAAE Board and was conducted over the four weeks following the Board meeting, based on the teachers' schedule. Each of these individual interviews focused on the participants' past experiences as members of the planning group for previous continuing professional education programs as well as their perceptions of the communications and interactions they experience as part of the planning group for the current annual summer conference. The participants were each given a copy of the round one interview consent form (Appendix I) to review and sign prior to beginning the interview. The researcher explained the form and offered to answer any questions the participants had regarding the study. Each teacher was provided a second copy of the consent form for his or her records.

The interviews in round one were conducted in two parts. According to Weiss it is "desirable to interview respondents more than once" (Weiss, 1994, p. 57) to allow

the time needed to expand the discussion and allow the respondents to share their stories, rather than limit the frame of the questions to fit one interview time period. The two-part interviews also allowed the participants time to think about the interview topics between sessions and consider other points that they wanted to share or issues that they needed to further clarify in response to the initial questions. Each of the part one interviews in round one was approximately 40 – 65 minutes in length (Table 3). The second part of the round one interview for each teacher was scheduled long enough after the first part to allow time for the participant to receive and review a copy of the first transcript to review it for accuracy and additions. A brief letter regarding the second part of the first round interview (Appendix J) was sent with the first transcript via email. Each of the part two interviews was 20 – 75 minutes in length (Table 3). The second part of the round one interview focused on follow-up questions based on the researcher's review of the first transcript and attention to questions that had not been well addressed in the first session. After the second part of the interviews were transcribed they were sent to the respective interviewees to review for accuracy and clarification (Yin, 2003). The round one interviews produced a total of 670 minutes (11 hours) of recordings (Table 3).

Round Two Interviews. A second round of interviews was conducted with the three teachers in the planning group who had five or more years of experience in the planning process. These teachers with more experience were able to share perspectives of the planning process that reflected changes in the work over time. Each of the experienced teachers was asked to review and sign the second round interview consent form (Appendix K) prior to the start of the interview session. The researcher explained the consent form and offered to answer any questions regarding the research project. Each teacher was provided with a second copy of the consent form to keep in his or her records. The three round two interviews were 30 – 50

minutes in length and produced a total of 110 minutes (1.8 hours) of recordings (Table 3).

Focus Group

This study used a focus group as a means of seeking the teachers' reactions to the categories developed in the preliminary analysis of the documents, in-depth interviews, and observations gathered throughout the study (Patton, 2002). All eight of the teachers in the study were invited to participate in the focus group (Appendix L). Due to scheduling conflicts only four teachers were able to participate in the focus group session. The remaining four teachers were given copies of the material shared in the focus group, and they were asked to provide the researcher with any feedback or comments. Before the focus group began the researcher reviewed the focus group consent form (see Appendix M) with the participants and addressed any questions they may have had about the focus group process or the research project. Each participant was asked to sign one copy of the consent form and keep one copy of the form for his or her records. The social context of the focus group allowed the participants not only to respond to categories with their own perspectives, but to build on those responses and the responses of others to further articulate their understanding or belief about the questions associated with the categories. The researcher followed a protocol (Appendix N) that was structured around the categories developed through the data analysis procedures explained below. The focus group was audio-recorded to complement the field notes and observations gathered during the session (Hatch, 2002). The focus group was 55.3 minutes in length and resulted in one major outcome, the teachers requested that the findings of the study emphasize the importance of the collaboration between the teachers, the Agricultural Education Outreach staff, and the Agriculture Tech Prep program. The teachers were very

satisfied with the categories and summaries of the coded quotes within each category outlined in Appendix N.

Data Analysis Procedures

The intent of this descriptive case study (Yin, 2003) was to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the teacher participants in the continuing professional education program planning process and “develop conceptual categories to support the theoretical assumptions” (Merriam, 1998, p. 38) regarding the participation of adult learners in educational program planning within the framework provided by the Cervero and Wilson (2006) planning theory. Yin referred to this process as analytic generalizations where “a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study” (2003, p. 33) as a means of guiding the data analysis procedures. The specific analysis process followed the constant comparative method in which “joint coding and analysis” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1995, p. 103) was conducted where “each incident” was “compared with other incidents for similarities and differences....to identify properties and dimensions” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 73) that were specific to each category as they were developed. The chain of evidence diagram in Figure 1 provides an illustration of the relationships among the literature, research questions, propositions, data collection activities, and the results of the data analysis process.

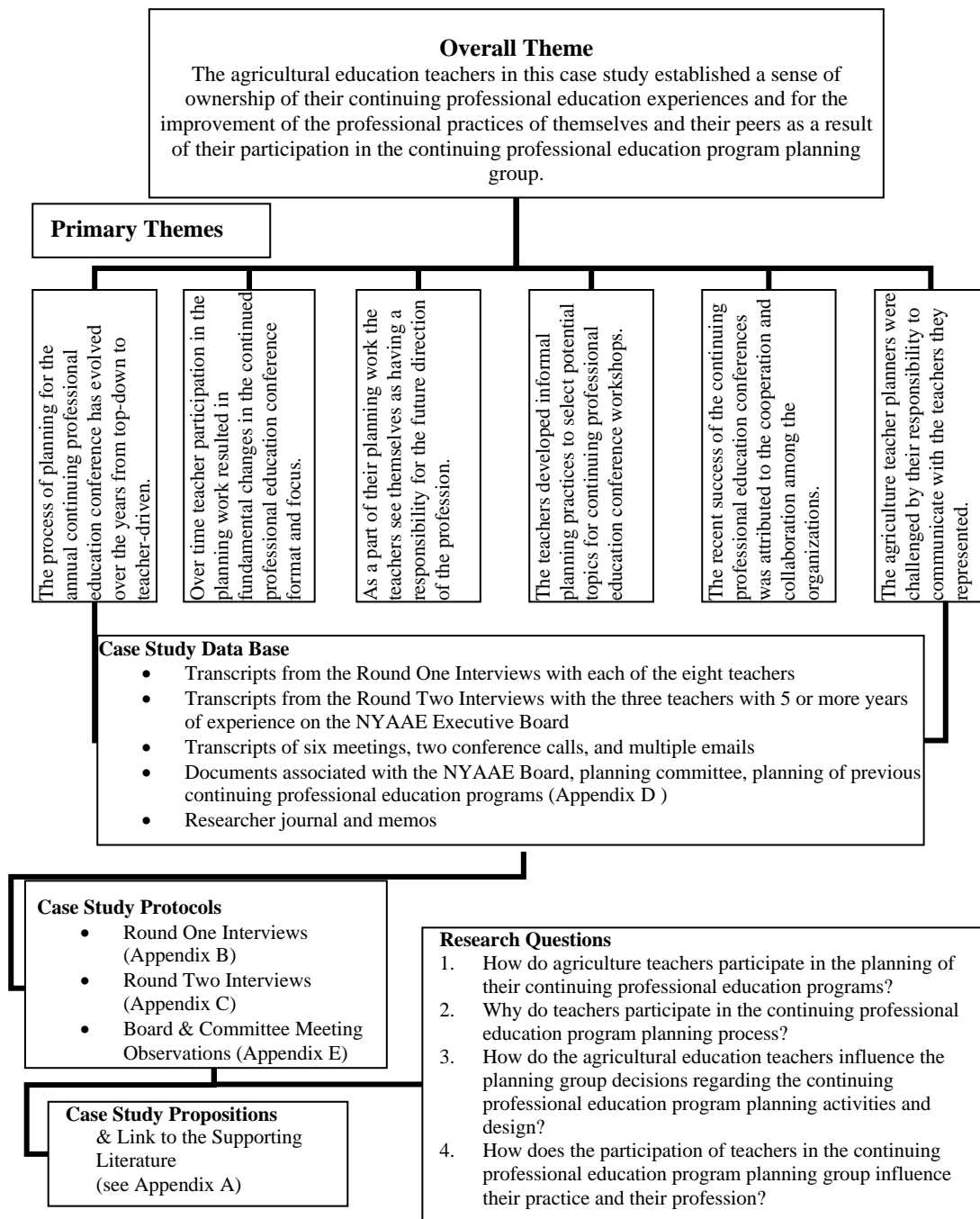


Figure 1: Chain of Evidence (COSMOS Corporation as cited in Yin, 2003)

The researcher attended to the analysis of the data throughout the data collection process as recommended in the literature (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1995; Patton, 2002). To collect her thoughts and perceptions of the work of the teachers in

the case as well as the discussions in their interviews, the researcher kept an open journal to record her perceptions and help her develop her ideas about the potential direction or focus of the analysis. This journal provided valuable guidance to the researcher throughout the analyses process. Early insights and observation were used to develop a number of the categories (Appendix O). Additional memos were attached to the transcriptions of the group observations and interviews as a record of the researcher's initial interpretation of the data and early identification of possible codes and categories.

As a part of the early data analysis the researcher transcribed each of the 19 interviews as well as the recordings of each of the six meeting observations which created a total of 515 pages of data in transcriptions. The transcriptions were completed using Windows Media Payer© and Express Scribe© transcription software. In addition to the transcriptions, the collection of documents examined in the study totaled 241 pages. The researcher used the Atlis ti© software package to store, manage, code into categories, and aid in the analysis of the transcripts and related documents. Upon completion of the transcriptions, the researcher reviewed the data and began initial coding informed by the literature outlined in the propositions, the words of the participants, and the researcher's interpretation of the investigation (Constas, 1992). The categories developed in the analysis of the initial transcriptions and documents were reviewed by the researcher sporadically through the coding process to "differentiate one category/theme from another and to identify properties and dimensions specific to that category/theme" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 73). Those categories that demonstrated similarities with others were integrated into one category that represented the existing set of quotes and excerpts from the originals (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1995). Once all of the transcripts and documents were coded the researcher examined each associated quote and excerpt within each category to

ensure that the quotes and excerpts were consistent with the others. Those that were miscoded were reviewed within their original document or transcript and recoded. After the categories and associated quotes and excerpts were reviewed for their accuracy, the categories were integrated again into category themes (Appendix O). The category themes provided in Appendix O included the origins of the category development (Constas, 1992). The researcher provided the teachers in the case study copies of the category theme lists for their review and feedback during the focus group session conducted at the conclusion of the data collection process to ensure that categories and codes were “credible to the persons who provided the information which the set is presumed to assimilate” (Patton, 2002, p. 466). As a result of the teachers’ feedback during the focus group session, the researcher reviewed the categories and made small revisions to the categories. Specifically, the teachers believed that it was important to clarify in the findings the substantial influence of the collaboration between organizations and the resources that were available for the continuing professional education program as a result of the collaborations. Finally, the category themes were reduced (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1995) to create the overall theme as it emerged from the earlier categories and themes.

Trustworthiness, Validity, and Reliability

The methods that were employed in this case study were designed to incorporate a number of strategies to enhance the trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the potential research findings. To address potential concerns regarding construct validity this case study incorporated multiple methods to gather data from different perspectives and sources including interviews with the eight teachers in the case, observation of the planning meetings and the electronic communications between group members, as well as an analysis of multiple documents associated with the planning committee and Board activities. Each of the teachers was asked to

review the transcripts of their interviews, and the two teachers who served as president and past-president on the NYAAE Executive Board were asked to review the planning meeting transcripts and the case study findings. The teachers were encouraged to provide feedback and edits to all of these documents. Once the preliminary analysis was completed, the focus group allowed the participants an opportunity to react to and clarify the categorical distinctions and patterns developed through the initial analysis of the components of the study. The past president and president then reviewed the findings chapters of this document to ensure that the work represented the activities and perspectives of the teachers in the case study. Finally, the chain of evidence illustrated in Figure 1 was used to further strengthen the construct validity of the study (Yin, 2003) by demonstrating the flow and logic of the case study work. The chain of evidence (Figure 1) also strengthens the reliability of the study by illustrating the connections between the existing literature in continuing professional education and adult program planning, the study protocols, sources of data, finally the primary themes and overall finding. Furthermore, the protocols for the interviews and meeting observations (Appendix B, C, D, & N) outline the focus of each of the respective methods of data collection.

Researcher Bias and Limitations of the Study

Insider/Outsider Considerations

The researcher in this project benefited from maintaining what Young (2004) referred to as both insider and outsider status within the continuing professional education program planning group involved in this study. The insider status resulted from the researcher's seven years of classroom teaching experience and ten years of experience as an administrator of the Agricultural Education Outreach program in the Department of Education at Cornell University. Since the researcher has now left this administrative position to assume a graduate assistantship, she created some distance

between herself and the classroom teachers in the study, and therefore shifted to an outsider relationship with this group. The challenge for the researcher was to maintain the “values and perspectives that are associated with insiderness while being conscientious about and appreciative of what being on the outside means for advancing conversations with people” (Young, 2004, p. 201).

It was critical to maintain a collaborative relationship with the participants, rather than representing the authority from the university. As part of a collaborative relationship, Haverkamp (2005) recommended that the researcher treat the review of informed consent as, “an ongoing, mutually negotiated process rather than as a single event,” (p. 154) and that the researcher needed to be keenly aware of her responsibilities in a “fiduciary role” (p. 151) in her relationships with participants. While it could have been difficult to establish and maintain distance with the study participants, an effort was taken to “clarify expectations” (Suzuki, Muninder, Mattis, & Quizon, 2005), maintain healthy relationships with the participants, and reduce the chances of misunderstandings (Haverkamp, 2005, p. 154). The researcher remained aware that semi-structured interviews in particular were intrusions into the personal and professional lives of the participants (Haverkamp, 2005). Member checks were used to ensure the accuracy of the researcher interpretations and to maintain the relationships of trust with the participants.

When the researcher served as the research instrument in a qualitative study (Woods, 1996) she tried to not, “stand above or outside the research” (p. 51) but within the research context. The researcher in this study tried to be aware of how her participation in the research affected the culture, participants, and the context. Lofland (2006) cautioned that “if you are already...a member of the setting, you almost ‘naturally’ possess (or will possess) the convert stance. You have easy access to understanding. You need, therefore to at least initially, to seek mechanisms for

distancing” (p. 22). While the role of observer situated the researcher as taking the “role of other” (Woods, 1996, p. 61) within the research context, caution was taken by the researcher to be aware of the risk of losing perspective because of relationships and close associations with the participants of the study. Utilizing a journal (Spradley, 1980) assisted this researcher in recording and later reflecting on her personal experiences that would influence the interpretation of the observation data associated with particular events. Tedlock (as cited in Suzuki et al., 2005) described this as observing the participation of the participant observer. Specifically the journal provided the researcher with a space in which to record her ideas about the participant interviews and actions shortly after they were observed. These ideas were helpful later in the coding and analysis work. The journal was also used to note points where the researcher was concerned about how her previous relationships with the teachers may have influenced the meetings she observed. Again, these notes were useful for the researcher to reference during the analysis. The researcher found that it was especially satisfying to record what she perceived as two breakthroughs that occurred during the interviews late in the study. The researcher did not utilize the journal as effectively as a means of working through perceived problems or concerns she experienced during her work.

Limitations of the Study

As with all research this study has limitations. While the researcher collected as many notes and reports from previous meetings as possible, there were records of previous planning meetings that were no longer in existence. The study had to therefore rely on the teachers’ reflections and interpretations of the group activities as they were shared during the interviews where the researcher could not verify the accounts and interpretations. The interviews also relied on the ability of the teachers to recall events and their ability to provide perspectives on events that occurred at

some time in the past. These experiences, as they were recalled, may have been influenced by the teacher's ability to recall details of events and their interpretation of these events over time. Finally, this study did not include interviews with the other members of the NYAAE Board, and therefore the data does not account for the perspectives of the non-teachers who worked within the group.

Summary

This chapter has included the explanation and justification of the research methods for this case study of the teacher participation in the planning for the annual agricultural education continuing professional education program. The chapter has included the rationale for selecting a qualitative case study design as well as a discussion of interviews, observations, document analysis, and the focus group methods were to be used to gather the data necessary to address the research questions. An explanation has also been provided for the participant selection criteria, data analysis and the criteria that were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study's findings.

CHAPTER 4

THE TEACHER PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING MEETINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine learner participation in the planning of continuing professional education. The site and audience for investigating learner involvement was the planning of an annual continuing professional education program for New York State teachers of agricultural education. The purpose of this Chapter is to present an overview of the personalities of the teachers and a summary of the major planning meetings, both face-to-face and in the form of conference calls, involved in the study. My intention is to provide a human face to the people in the study and to describe the context for the thematic analysis, which will be presented in Chapter 5.

As explained in Chapter 3, the professional development program planning group in this study included among its total of 15 members, six female and two male agricultural education teachers who were elected by their peers to serve as officers and Board members in the New York Association of Agricultural Educators (NYAAE). The NYAAE Board serves as the planning group for the annual summer professional development conference for agricultural education teachers. It is important to understand the professional backgrounds of the individual teachers and the contexts in which they teach in order to understand their comments about and perceptions of their participation in the professional development planning committee. This chapter will introduce the individual teachers, describe their professional practice, and describe the work of the professional development planning group. The information for this study was gathered from multiple sources. First, two interviews were conducted with each of the eight teachers; these were followed with additional interviews with the three teachers who had extensive years of experience on the NYAAE Board and in the planning activities. In addition to the interviews, the researcher observed each of the

meetings of this planning committee and the professional development committee that occurred between the beginning of October, 2007 and the end of January, 2008.

During the duration of this study, the group planned the summer conference location, the conference dates, the schedule of conference activities, preliminary workshop topics, and the preliminary plans for workshop presenters. In addition to the interviews and observations, written documents related to the group's activities were gathered from the group's web site, an archive of the group's records in the state staff's office, and emails exchanged between group members. Finally, a focus group was conducted with four of the NYAAE Board members to verify the accuracy of the researcher's recording and categorization of the teacher's statements.

The Teachers

The teachers in this study represented a range in years of teaching experience, years of experience on the NYAAE Board, and in the curriculum content that they taught in their agriculture programs (Table 4). Four of the teachers explained that they became involved on the NYAAE Board because other teachers encouraged them to run for election onto the Board. Five of the teachers indicated that they also participated in professional development planning activities in their local school districts.

Table 4: Teachers in the planning group

Teacher Pseudonym	NYAAE Role	Years of teaching experience	Years of exp on Board	Encouraged to participate in planning by another teacher	Participate in professional development planning in local school
Andrew	President	29	7	X	X
Mary	President Elect	20	1		X
Stephanie	Secretary	21	15		
Christine	Treasurer	14	3	X	X
Theresa	Past President	8	6		

Table 4: Continued

Elizabeth	Regional Representative	6	2	X	
Jean	Regional Representative	7	1	X	X
Thomas	Regional Representative	7	2		X

Half of the teachers had been encouraged by one or more of their peers to serve as NYAAE officers, which automatically places them on the planning group detailed in this study. The teachers also shared that they were interested in participating in the planning work because they enjoyed knowing what was going on, and they enjoyed helping prepare for the conference. In particular they believed that as members of the NYAAE Board and planning committee, they were in a position to help change something if change was needed to improve the program format or the content emphasis. Teachers on the Board explained that they believed that they were helping grow local agriculture programs by better preparing local agriculture teachers. Mary was particularly interested in becoming part of the NYAAE Board since she was interested in helping maintain some consistency in the state leadership because at the time of this study there were a number of personnel changes within the state staff structure that assisted with professional development and other services for agricultural education teachers. Once involved in the conference planning Andrew explained that the feedback he received from his peers had motivated him to continue working in the planning committee and NYAAE Board. He stated that he had people say to him “you guys did a great job with the conference this year, so how are you going to best that one?” He went on to explain “well, that becomes a challenge and I guess I have developed the enthusiasm for it based on it is a challenge”. The following section provides an introduction to each of the individual teachers who participated in the planning group at the time of the study.

Andrew is the senior teacher in the group with 29 years of classroom teaching experience in a very small rural community. He serves as NYAAE president during the period of this study. Andrew is a friendly and patient person with three grown daughters all of whom had participated in his agriculture program. One of Andrew's daughters is now pursuing her own career in agricultural education. During his seven years of service on the NYAAE executive Board, Andrew has worked specifically in the conference planning committee for four years contributing his experience and enthusiasm for new learning opportunities to the planning team.

Mary has twenty years of teaching experience in two different school systems and serves as the NYAAE president-elect. While she began her career in a single teacher department, she moved to a nearby district nine years ago and helped to expand that program and course enrollment to the point that a second agriculture teacher was added. Mary is a very enthusiastic and positive person whose passion for teaching and the agriculture industry are very evident when she teaches workshops at the teachers' conference, during Board meetings, and during her interviews for this study. Mary has had a unique leadership role in the NYAAE Board since she served as president more than twelve years ago but stepped down to take time to focus on raising her three children and developing her local program. She explained that with the "change in (state staff) leadership, the change in so many new teachers, this is a good time to step back in" and become involved again in the professional organization. Mary also serves on a local school professional development planning committee.

Stephanie has had the longest tenure on the NYAAE executive committee, serving 15 years with the group during her 21 years of teaching experience in a rural school district. During this study Stephanie was the NYAAE secretary. Stephanie is a very engaging and friendly person who became a part of the planning group through

the encouragement of her former agriculture teacher. Stephanie is a very dynamic speaker with a big smile and the ability to bring people together while still challenging traditions and expressing her point of view.

Christine's twelve years of teaching experience has been in two different school districts. She began teaching as her second career, after a number of years of experience in production agriculture and agricultural business. She serves as NYAAE treasurer during the duration of this study. Christine, a quiet and relaxed person, decided to become a part of the NYAAE executive committee through the encouragement of Andrew. Christine and Andrew work in neighboring school districts and have done a number of collaborative projects together, including their current regional professional development project for local academic teachers who are interested in integrating career development exploration activities in their curriculum.

Theresa has only been teaching eight years but has already served as president of the NYAAE Board during her six years of service on the NYAAE Board. During this study Theresa was serving as past-president. Theresa is a high energy, enthusiastic person who is very focused on the development of her students as well as the development of her fellow teachers. During Theresa's time on the Board, she has emphasized the need to create professional development programs that encouraged people to communicate and work together. Theresa explained that "if you want to have a strong agriculture program in the state, whether it is college level all the way down to the Agriculture in the Classroom programs, then we all have to work together".

Elizabeth is in her sixth year of teaching and she recently became involved as a regional representative on the NYAAE Board through the encouragement of several of her peers. Elizabeth is a very bright and enthusiastic agriculture teacher who is focused on emphasizing the science of agriculture in her local program. She is very

well respected by her peers. Last spring Elizabeth had a baby and brought her infant daughter along to the professional development conference.

Jean is in her third year of teaching at her current school. Prior to her work in this district she taught four years in another region of the state. Jean is currently serving as one of the regional representatives on the NYAAE Board. When Jean began her current position, she was teaching new agriculture courses in a school that had not had an agriculture program in many decades. Of the school's approximately 180 students enrolled in grades seven through twelve, Jean now has roughly 70 participating in her agriculture courses. In addition to sharing her passion for agriculture with her students, Jean has taught workshops in plant science at previous professional development conferences.

Thomas taught three years in one area of the state before relocating back to a school district closer to his family's farm four years ago. Thomas joined the NYAAE Board as a regional representative so that he could help plan the annual summer professional development conference. His motivation came from his concern with the past planning practices; as he explained, "I got involved with it as a teacher or as an educator understanding that when we go to an inservice we see a lot of times new data coming at us or new information coming at us, but it is all into a PowerPoint, it is all in a lecture time and in the agriculture field we obviously cannot do that all of the time. We have hands on workshops."

Together this group of teachers provides collaborative leadership to assist in identifying the continuing professional education program components that best address the needs identified by members of the state agricultural education professional community. In addition to the eight teachers, one other person is key to the data analysis. She is the state staff member who is responsible for planning the continuing professional education programs. She is identified in this document by the

pseudonym Lynn. The following section provides highlights of the group's work during their planning meetings and conference calls.

NYAAE Board Meeting October 13, 2007

During the Board meeting the group reviewed five options for potential conference sites. Andrew proposed that the Board consider locating the 2008 conference in a central area of the state to take advantage of the land-grant university's agricultural research station. He explained that

Over the course of some research the discussion has been that yes, while we would love to have conference at camp, there are certain times when we need teachers to kind of pull away and go someplace else. In looking at some research on places to go, Lynn and I kind of said that we have this field station that we have never used, and it would be a real good place to go to do some workshops. So we started looking. She did a lot of online research and I actually went and scouted around one Saturday when all the (student leaders for the state's agricultural education youth organization) officers needed to be at Cornell. And we have done some research about things that could be done there; the people at the field station are really excited about the potential of us coming there. We have also looked at some other places that we might want to go for a conference.

Andrew and Lynn reported on their research of the area hotels as well as the agriculture research station. Andrew and Lynn offered the group the additional options to hold the conference at the agricultural education youth leadership camp facility, the site of the conference the previous two summers, or a conference resort in the western area of the state which had been considered for previous conferences but it has been beyond the group's budget. The group recognized that no matter what their

decision was regarding the conference location, some people would be pleased and others would be disappointed.

The discussion regarding facilities focused on the meals, lodging and meeting room space available at each location. As a part of the group discussion Andrew reported that “basically, my direction to (state staff) was that we need to look at something that would keep the total cost under \$500. That seems to be a cutoff point that is pretty obvious to most, anytime we talk about conference nobody wants to go beyond that.” The discussion also included a consideration of the conference date with a recommendation from the president to hold the conference during the state final exam week. Andrew explained that if the traditional week of conference was used it would conclude in July and cross over two school budget years, and therefore pose a problem for payment by local schools. If the conference was held during the state exam week, it would conflict with most of the science exams since “the only science Regents [test] that is not offered during that week is chemistry” and many of the agriculture teachers in the state teach a section of Regents science. Theresa explained the conflict faced by other teachers with her counter-point that “if you don’t have it during Regents’ week we have quite a few of teachers in the state that are not paid to work in the summer who would not be allowed to go because it would go into July.”

The Board made the following decisions regarding the inservice conference:

- It was decided that the conference would be held at one of the three hotels in the vicinity of the Geneva, NY branch of the Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station. The professional development committee was charged with recommending the specific hotel.
- The conference events would be held during the state’s week of Regents exams.

- The Board committed to have NYAAE spend up to \$4,000 to pay for meals and snacks on one day of the conference to offset the overall conference expense for participants.

The group recommended that Andrew post an update on the state agricultural education list-serve to inform teachers of the conference date, general conference location, the planned use of the land grant college field station, and an update on the work being done with the fireside chat information.

Planning Committee Meeting October 13, 2007

The planning committee, including Andrew, Thomas and Lynn, met immediately following the Board meeting. Two members of the committee (Theresa and the Ag Tech Prep Director) were unable to stay because of time constraints. As the group began its discussion, the Director of the State Agriculture Tech Prep program requested that they consider selecting the hotel based on the group's needs and the potential to support the most successful conference. The Director emphasized to the group that "I want you to pick"; however, he couched that statement with his expectation that

We need the best location for all of those kinds of things (programming ideas discussed by the group). It is important that we pick the right spot. You have a whole lot of different things from (one hotel option) to these other places. You need to process the advantages and pluses of all of those things. All I am asking is that if it, if your choice is the more expensive one, give me a call and see if I can...NYAAE just decided [in the earlier board meeting] to subsidize this event. I have another fund that I could use to help subsidize, but I don't want that to influence the decision.

The group decided on their first and second choice hotels based on the availability of meeting space for their workshop activities. In their efforts to make this decision, the group wanted to ensure that the hotel that they selected would be able to provide a comfortable and relaxing environment for the program. For each of the hotels, the group developed a list of advantages and disadvantages that included a number of aspects including the size of the meeting rooms, the distance from the hotel to other entertainment venues, restaurants and shopping as well as outdoor space around the hotel for workshop activities and teacher activities during free time. The Agriculture Tech Prep Director suggested that the group look at other options to subsidize the cost of the hotel explaining “so if you are in that range let me know what the problem is and whether between I and Ag Ed Outreach or, let’s look to the other organizations, let’s look to other sources that might subsidize. Not even that, we could go out to Farm Bureau, we could go out to” his comment was completed by Thomas, “find sponsorship”.

The group had a healthy discussion about the potential options for the children’s program but later realized that due to scheduling of the conference during Regents week, most children would still be attending classes, and therefore not attending the conference. Instead of the 28 children ranging in age from 6 months to fourteen years old who attended the children’s program at the previous conference, there would likely be only a few pre-school age children who would attend with their parents. Lynn emphasized that while she agreed that the children’s program was important, she encouraged the group to focus on the needs of the teachers’ portion of the conference and allow the development of the children’s program to occur after the primary program was established. She clarified her perspective as “I am not as concerned about the children’s program just yet I guess. I mean I know I should be but I feel like, I feel that would be the least of our problems wherever we go at this

point. I think that, because too often too, we will plan something that will, we think is going to meet the needs and then we don't get the numbers for that too so I don't want to."

The group discussion included an interest in a Wine and Culinary Center that is adjacent to one of the hotels. While the programs at the institute were expensive and therefore an anticipated barrier to including them in the program, the group agreed that teachers would enjoy the programs offered at this venue. The committee recommended that Maria or Andrew talk to the Commissioner of the New York Department of Agriculture and Markets to determine if there was funding available to sponsor the teacher participation in experiences at the institute since there was a display of the department's state agriculture marketing program at the institute.

The group requested that the state staff investigate the costs and feasibility of conducting the annual NYAAE banquet on one of the paddle boats on one of the lakes near the hotels. Options for transportation to and from the Cornell University Agriculture Experiment Station were also discussed to reduce potential problems with having the teachers travel to the site from the hotel in a timely manner. One committee member said that he planned to drive by one of the hotels and check it out on his way home the following day. The group members discussed meeting once a month between November and March using conference calls. It was requested that the group meet via conference call in November. The group members spoke briefly about workshop ideas but chose to wait until the next meeting to include the other committee members. Thomas suggested that the state staff provide some suggested dates for the conference call and send the committee members electronic copies of the results of the web survey to review before the next meeting.

Conference Call November 8, 2007

Despite efforts by Andrew and several state staff members to promote full participation in the conference call planning meeting most of the group members had scheduling conflicts, with the result that only the two of the teachers were on the call. The purpose of the call was to select the conference hotel. After a brief discussion about the financial differences between the top two choices, Andrew supported selecting the hotel offering the lower cost and the possibility of having two days away from the hotel for activities at the field station. One of these days could have been at the local community college. Transportation for those two days would be an issue. During the group discussion a suggestion was made to consider shortening the conference by one day to reduce the costs and allow the group to hold the conference at the hotel facility that provided more spacious meeting rooms and a better location along one of the lakes. Lynn and Andrew agreed to work on an idea about how to modify the schedule to decrease the costs with a minimal loss of professional development hours. The modifications could include starting earlier on Sunday. The participants decided that they needed more people involved in the final decision on the hotel and the possible modifications to the program schedule so Lynn was asked to assemble more information on the financial differences between hotels and the effect of scheduling the conference for one less day and send the information out to the full Board with a request for everyone on the Board to meet by conference call on the following Monday evening. Both Lynn and Andrew indicated that neither of them wanted to be responsible for making the decision on a more expensive hotel and a modified schedule without the involvement and input from other Board members.

Conference Call November 12, 2007

All of the members of the NYAAE Board were invited by email to participate in this conference call; however, only five of the teachers and Lynn were able to

participate. The group agreed to modify the schedule to conduct workshops on Sunday and Monday at the hotel and activities at the field station on Tuesday. The association's business session and annual awards banquet would be held on Monday afternoon. The suggestion was made to offer optional tours on Wednesday for those teachers who were interested and able to stay the additional day. The group voted to have the conference at the more expensive hotel since the shorter program at this location fit the NYAAE budget for the conference. The group also briefly discussed an issue regarding the State FFA. In her reflection on the call Mary observed, "They asked for extra people to be on the conference call so they could have more direction. They did not want to make the decisions just as a small group. They wanted more teachers involved. So we, they gave us the background in the email and then the conference call Monday night. It was a very good conference call. I was thinking how much better it was to have an hour and a half conference call than to drive four hours to sit down for a couple of hours and drive home. So the conference call was very good." According to Andrew "the conference call was significant because the fact that there were teachers that were not on the committee that were invited to be on the conference call that brought some good points that we as a committee didn't quite look at." Thomas concluded that "once we talked it through I thought it was pretty good. Myself, I am for it. I think it is a good idea." However he went on to explain that while it allowed more people to participate and saved time that would have been used for travel, he was concern about using conference calls because "you really can't hear what other people are going to say because they are a little shy about sharing their opinions. That is why I would rather have face-to-face. I like face-to-face meetings better than a conference call or an email because it is hard to tell if everybody was in favor of it (the group's decisions)."

Planning Committee Meeting November 17, 2007

Three members of the planning committee met during a State FFA leadership event held on the Cornell campus. Jean joined the group since she was also attending the student leadership event. The meeting began with a review of the previous week's conference call discussion and the decision about the hotel site and change in the program to make the last day more flexible for teachers with state exams. During the meeting the members discussed the possibility of receiving an agricultural tourism and education grant from the state Department of Agriculture and Markets and the need for the group to remain flexible since the grant could change a number of aspects of the conference program. If awarded, the grant would add elementary teachers to the conference and additional elementary level agricultural education workshops. The committee members determined that the registration fee for agriculture teachers would be \$475 for Sunday through Tuesday conference participation and \$500 for the Sunday through Wednesday participation. The group reached the following decisions regarding the program schedule:

- Start the program Sunday at 1:00 pm.
- Offer three workshops, presented twice, at the hotel on Sunday afternoon.
- Host the dinner at the hotel.
- Provide an evening session for the full group on Sunday.
- Offer three workshops, presented twice, at the hotel on Monday morning.
- Conduct the NYAAE business session during lunch on Monday.
- Offer three workshops presented twice, at the hotel Monday afternoon.
- Conduct the NYAAE Banquet as a part of the dinner program on Monday.
- Offer multiple workshops at the Cornell University Agriculture Experiment Station all day Tuesday.
- Use NYAAE funds to sponsor the dinner on Tuesday.

- Provided tours of the regional agricultural businesses on Wednesday.

The group began the meeting with a brainstorming session to produce a list of possible tour ideas that included: wineries, an organic vegetable farm, a food processing operation, a local botanical garden, a boat tour, a gaming and racing track, area golf courses, and a glass blowing facility. Andrew reported that he had contacted local agriculture teachers, and they had provided recommendations for several of these tours. During the discussion of tours, Theresa cautioned that “we just need to make sure it is a valuable experience on Wednesday because if it is not a valuable experience then it is no point. I think that is what people are going to look for.” This was an effort to remind the group that they represent other teachers and the interests of those teachers.

Lynn reviewed the possible workshop topics at the field station and explained that more information would be available after her telephone visit with a Cornell University Agriculture Experiment Station representative on Nov. 27th. The ideas that were being investigated at the Experiment Station included micro propagation since it had been requested by teachers but was unavailable at the previous conference facility. The committee members were invited to participate in the conference call if their schedule allowed.

The committee members brainstormed possible workshop topics in reference to the list of survey results that the state staff member made reference to during the meeting. Workshop ideas included:

- a workshop sponsored by DuPont and Lab Aids and presented by a state agricultural education teacher at the national agriculture youth leadership convention and national agricultural education conference, a homing pigeon project proposed by the state agriculture in the classroom project
- the introduction of a book by Lab Aids entitled *A Material World*

- instruction in how to guide students in the preparation of work experience award applications in the state youth leadership program
- prepare students for career development events in the youth leadership organization
- invite faculty members from the local community college to share their facilities for hands-on environmental science workshops, viticulture, and agriculture mechanics.

The group then brainstormed potential workshop topics by first identifying teachers that they knew or who had been recommended by others to present lessons on specific topics including hydraulics, agricultural science laboratory activities, animal science, vegetable production, plant science, agriscience fair research projects, animal anatomy, water quality, maple syrup production, landscape design, and artistic welding. There was some discussion about how the group might include a teacher sharing session in the program to allow for the selection of the *Ideas Unlimited* award winner if the teachers were not going to be in groups or teams. During the brainstorming sessions the only group member who had a copy of the conference survey results from the previous year was the state staff person. The remaining group members worked without reference to the list of requested topics from the survey.

The group discussed again how they might be able to fund an experience for the teachers at the Wine and Culinary Center. Ideas included contacting the Department of Agriculture and Markets to find out more about the possibility of utilizing the Center for teacher education. Finally, the group discussed ideas about having the NYAAE banquet as a part of a boat cruise on the lake next to the hotel property. Later Jean shared “I think we did very well. We really worked well

together and kind of everybody had ideas of what they wanted, and everybody's ideas were shared and respected."

Planning Committee Meeting December 14, 2007

During the conference a group of two teacher planners, the state professional development specialist, and the Director of the Agriculture Tech Prep program, as well as an additional teacher who was attending the conference, gathered to share their ideas about potential workshops. The group met to discuss the workshops they had already attended at the national conference and how those topics might be of interest or helpful to their fellow agriculture teachers. Workshops that were identified for presentation either this year or another year included:

- Food science – making gumdrops out of Jell-O and other labs from a packet of materials that were given to each workshop participant. It is something the President might be able to teach to others.
- Natural selection and antibiotic resistance through DuPont and Lab Aids sponsorship. It was explained that it could be done easily. One of the teacher planners thought she could work with a faculty member from one of the state agriculture and technical colleges to provide a workshop with this material as a functional piece.
- Corn Genetics – a Lab Aids workshop
- Soil Erosion & Water Pollution – a Lab Aids based workshop
- Entrepreneurship – this looked like it could be a really good program but it was not well developed or ready for easy use by other teachers. It could be ready to share with others in one or two years.
- CAERT Curriculum materials – the group agreed that this curriculum would not be something that would be presented this year but the group might be

doing something with it in the future if the state adopts the materials as a state-wide curriculum.

- Career and Technical Education program certification discussion panel - the group decided that they really needed to think about the purpose or intent of this panel but it might include an update on the student assessment project.
- Cornell University curriculum resources that may be on-line and available to use by the end of the school year.
- Bio Fuels was a good activity and a great lab (Fueling trade-offs). The most critical part was the use of critical thinking and inquiry.
- How do we engage teachers in the NAAE on-line communities of practice?
- Filling the void, where will future agriculture teachers come from: A recruitment and retention session. The group was not sure what form this should be at the conference and perhaps there would be more information on the issue provided at the national agricultural education leadership inservice program offered several months after this conference.

The group discussed the options and possibilities for inviting the Ambassadors from DuPont and Lab Aids programs to do workshops at individual state conferences. The list of the group's ideas did include items that would be or could be taught by teachers in New York and did not need an external presenter. During the discussion it was also mentioned that web site development was a topic that teachers had requested during other discussions, and it needed to be added to the list of potential workshops.

During follow-up interviews the two planning group members who attended the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) conference in Las Vegas the previous December shared that while they did attend inservice workshops while they were at the meeting, their primary reasons for attending the conference was to

serve as delegates to the NAAE business session and related regional meetings and committee sessions. At the conclusion of the national conference Theresa explained,

I don't know if this is critical in our planning work, I will be honest with you. I come. I am finance chair so that is why I am here and to represent NY for other purposes. In the years that I have been doing professional development work I have never been to a national conference that I have been impressed with the professional development work....we get to take home a lot we get a lot of stuff that we can physically go back and use. Whenever you come to a national workshop or whenever you come to even the other state or regional workshops you sit and have somebody talk to you, do you want to buy their product or not buy their product and very rarely do you leave with a take-home that you can go and implement right away without spending either a lot of money or changing what you are doing already. I think one of the benefits of the program that we have been offering in New York is because of (Agriculture Tech Prep) funding we can provide materials for that teacher to go back and use it in their class. Not all the time do we provide enough for a class set but there is always that ability to go and use it and to have something when you go home.

In contrast Andrew held a different perspective of the experience and he shared his thoughts:

I think that there were quite a few good workshops, most of the ones I went to presented some things or were done by some people that I think maybe we could bring in if we were able to. A couple of them were just awesome activities. There is a guy that is doing some stuff in Texas I think, with entomology that was just amazing. There were a

couple food science ones that were very good. By having enough of us there we got to see a lot of the workshops and whereas if we only had two or three people, if we just had the delegates there, then there are three people trying to flit around and take in as many as they could or maybe try to sneak in and out two in one session and then you don't really get the full benefit. I think this conference was very good as far as some of the stuff that was there. Being able to interact and some of the people we got to talk to. I picked up some ideas just from talking to some teachers in some of the workshops either before or after.

He therefore believed that in terms of the final workshop planning at the state level, "I think we got two or three ideas at Las Vegas."

Planning Committee Meeting January 26, 2008

The New York FFA scheduled a state-wide student leadership conference (FFA Made for Excellence) in January, 2008. During the first day of the Conference the planning committee was able to meet for over an hour. During the meeting two additional Board members, the Director of the Ag Tech Prep project, one additional Agricultural Education Outreach staff person, and one other teacher joined the group discussion. Andrew opened the meeting with a review of the latest plans for the summer conference. He reported that one of the state staff members had found two teachers who were interested in providing workshops at the conference.

Elizabeth asked for clarification regarding the plans to have teachers in teams as was done at the previous two conferences. The group decision was that since the conference was going to be located at a hotel instead of the environmental and leadership education facility that it would be too difficult to conduct the team events. The group agreed to take a break from the team event format for one year. Andrew explained that one other difficulty with the team format was likely to exist this year

because so many people were thinking about attending only part of the conference because of other school commitments during the exam week.

Andrew spent some time reviewing the schedule that had been developed at previous meetings. He also explained the possibility that the group could receive an additional grant to fund the participation of Agriculture in the Classroom elementary teachers in the conference. This would require the group to add workshops specific to the grant guidelines for the elementary teachers. Andrew also reminded the group that the registration fess had been set for \$475 for Sunday through Tuesday attendance and \$500 for the complete four-day program. This fee would be partially subsidized by the Ag Tech Prep project.

The group agreed that they were at a point in the planning process where they needed to start finalizing the workshop topics and presenters for the program since the facility decisions seemed to be pretty well set. John reported that Lynn had been working with the leaders at the agriculture experiment station to finalize the activities that will take place there. In addition to the experiment station sessions, John explained that there may be a couple of the workshops from the national NAAE conference that could be included in the program including a session presented by a New York teacher who was part of a national teacher continuing professional education program. The group agreed that they would need to work with the national sponsor of this program to determine what resources could be sponsored for the workshop.

Theresa explained that there may also be several workshops in which the group could create their own resource kits rather than purchasing them from a national supplier. The Ag Tech Prep Director made a point of explaining to the group that one important aspect of the educational materials from one particular national supplier was the incorporation of educational pedagogy that emphasized scientific inquiry and other

valuable “fundamental skills.” The group was not able to work too extensively on the workshop topic selection because the master list of ideas and tentative plans was not available during the meeting. Additional workshop ideas were sporadically provided by several of the group participants including the inclusion of a workshop on teacher recruitment and energy curriculum sponsored by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, more commonly known as NYCERDA.

Theresa provided an update on the proposed revisions to the *NAAE Ideas Unlimited* award selection process at the regional level. The planning committee decided that they would continue to have teachers who participate in this selection process at the state conference would be asked to continue to use the previous selection criteria when preparing their innovative teaching idea to share with their peers. The conference program includes a one and a half hour block of time on Sunday evening for teachers to share their ideas for consideration and selection as the state winner. In the last two conferences teachers were in teams and each team nominated one teacher to share their best team idea. Since the current conference program will not include teams, the planning committee discussed alternative ways to generate interests from teachers to enter the award competition. The planning committee decided that the three regional representatives on the NYAAE Board would be asked to find at least two teachers in their region who would be willing to share their innovative ideas for consideration for the state award. A plan was developed to have teachers submit their ideas to the regional representatives prior to the state association of FFA annual convention. At the FFA convention teachers would vote on the top six ideas that would then be presented at the teachers’ conference. Theresa and Thomas offered to organize the whole *Ideas Unlimited* selection process.

Four other workshop ideas were informally shared. These ideas included a food science topic and specific presenter suggested by Mary, the Farm Bureau Farm

Facts project recommended by Lynn, and training on the use of Google Calendar© also suggested by Lynn. Lynn provided a brief overview of the calendar for the planning committee. Finally Lynn shared with the planning committee that after she sent out a request for workshop presenters on the state agricultural education list-serve she received one proposal from one of the state agriculture colleges offering to provide a workshop session on establishing articulation agreements between high schools and their college. The planning committee members decided that rather than offering that topic as a workshop that they would invite all of the state agriculture colleges to have a staffed table of information set up during the Sunday evening social. It was decided that the planning committee would recommend that each college come prepared to talk about their articulation agreements.

The final topic in the meeting was to decide on the location of the NYAAE awards banquet on the Monday evening of the conference. Lynn provided the planning committee with information on the boat tour and hotel options that the group had expressed an interest in during a previous meeting. The planning committee decided on having the banquet on a three-hour boat tour at a cost of approximately \$45 per person. Lynn reminded the group that if they kept the costs at \$45 per person the total costs for the conference program will still be \$5,000 over budget but there was a plan to cover that expense. The next meeting of the planning committee was set for Monday, February 11th with the exact location and time to be determined. Lynn would notify the planning committee of the exact plans.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TEACHERS TO CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

The purpose of this study was to examine learner participation in the planning of continuing professional education. The site and audience for investigating learner involvement was the planning of an annual continuing professional education program for New York State teachers of agricultural education. The four major questions that guided this study were: 1.) How do agriculture teachers participate in the planning of their continuing professional education programs? 2.) Why do teachers participate in the continuing professional education program planning process? 3.) How do the agricultural education teachers influence the planning group decisions regarding the continuing professional education program planning activities and design? 4.) How does the participation of teachers in the continuing professional education program planning group influence their practice and their profession?

The data collection for this study involved observations of planning meetings, in-depth individual interviews with the eight teachers on the planning committee, documents associated with the history of the agricultural education planning work, emails exchanged during the planning process, a series of telephone conference calls for planning committee members; and a focus group used near the end of the process to validate the results of the analysis. All meetings and interviews were digitally recorded and the data were transcribed and coded for analysis.

This chapter is organized around the following six organizing themes that emerged from that analysis:

1. The process of planning for the annual continuing professional education conference has evolved over the years from top-down to teacher-driven.

2. Over time teacher participation in the planning work resulted in fundamental changes in the continued professional education conference format and focus.
3. As a part of their planning work, the teachers see themselves as having a responsibility for the future direction of the profession.
4. The teachers developed informal planning practices to select potential topics for continuing professional education conference workshops.
5. The recent success of the continuing professional education conferences was attributed to the cooperation and collaboration among the organizations.
6. The agriculture teacher planners were challenged by their responsibility to communicate with the teachers they represented.

These six themes converged to establish a single over-arching theme: The agricultural education teachers in this case study established a sense of ownership of their continuing professional education experiences and for the improvement of the professional practices of themselves and their peers as a result of their participation in the continuing professional education program planning group.

Evolution of the Planning Process

Theme: The process of planning for the annual continuing professional education conference has evolved over the years from top-down to teacher-driven.

In the early 1990s centralized, state-level leadership in agricultural education slowly decreased as the State Education Department staff members retired and were not replaced. Andrew reflected that:

When I first started teaching there were maybe six people at the State Education Department so they helped a lot with that stuff and then we

went through that period in the 1980s when we went from six to three,
to now half of a staff position.

This loss of leadership in the state structure created a void that was filled by the leadership of the state agricultural education teachers' association. At that time the organization was referred to as the Agriculture Teachers' Association of New York (ATANY). The association name was changed in the 1990s to the New York Association of Agricultural Educators (NYAAE). When the State Education Department was no longer able to plan the annual summer professional development conference the ATANY (now NYAAE) president became responsible, with some help from the NYAAE Board members, for planning the annual professional development conference. Andrew shared:

I can recall back to the years, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when basically the president of ATANY was responsible and maybe the State Education Department people would come in with some of their stuff, but the president was pretty much the one that went out and lined up this stuff.

As Andrew recalled what he could remember about the conferences in the early 1990s he explained that it "was a period there where most of what we did was some paper handouts and that was about all you came home with because there was [sic] not the people or the money to put things together." As a previous member of the NYAAE Board Mary reflected:

Probably 15 years ago, my earliest remembrance was a group of officers sitting around at a hotel in central New York maybe and brainstorming different workshops we could offer. We literally came to this meeting to brainstorm. None of us really had any idea what workshops to offer....So we all kind of haphazardly, based on our

background, came up with ideas for workshops. It was good for what we had back then but nothing near the quality we have today. It was kind of a hit-or-miss as far as materials and set-up, even content. The content we brought to the workshops was really based on who our officers were and what we thought we could do well. The entire conference was planned by the officers.

During the focus group Mary explained that in 1995 and 1996 a group of agriculture teachers requested funding from the state legislature to support the reinstatement of state level leadership positions that would be housed at Cornell University. This request was granted in the 1996 state budget and funds were routed through the Department of Agriculture and Markets in Albany as a contract to the Department of Education at Cornell. The project director then hired two full-time staff members as a part of a new Agricultural Education Outreach (AEO) program. According to the 2006 AEO annual funding proposal, the responsibilities of the state staff members included assisting the NYAAE Board members with the planning of the annual summer conference to “enhance the quality of agricultural instructional programs for secondary and postsecondary agricultural educators through inservice education.”

The NYAAE Board included eight teachers in this study as well as five other individuals including state staff, university faculty, and a representative from the State Education Department (Article IV, Section C, NYAAE Constitution and Bylaws). Teachers value the diversity in the Board. As Theresa said:

The reason we have all of them on there is for scope of reference. The college professors and the different tech schools have the ability to tell us the people who could do the presentations because we may not have the background for it. They can also key us into things that are

changing or that we need to be aware of as teachers. As teachers we try to stay on the forefront of things, whether it is education or agriculture but we don't always get that information, not for the lack of trying sometimes.

Stephanie agreed and provided a specific example that illustrated Theresa's point:

I did not know aquaculture existed until I went to a conference and found out about it. I never would have put aquaculture on a survey....I think that you have got to balance that somehow because we don't even know what is out there but that is where, I think, having teachers going to the national meetings, having state staff and some of the leadership coming in, working with Cornell, Ag Tech Prep, having everybody work together because then you are getting people who are working in the field and having this 'is it practical?' and then you have people coming in from Cornell and Tech Prep and state staff looking at it and saying here is something happening at the national level, lets pull it back to New York.

Teachers on the NYAAE Board explained that the current organization of the group provided more staff resource support for the continuing professional education conference and funding for the purchase of materials that were provided to teachers during the conference workshops. As Stephanie explained how her participation in the planning work had changed over time she observed:

Well, I think it is a whole leadership shift that, back when I first started it was State Education Department driven, and I am not even sure what happened to the list [of teacher requested needs]. I am sure that somebody at some point looked at them, whether they looked at them and tallied them though...I just think they are looked at now....Before

we gave our list and I don't know what or who actually did it and then the next year we would show up at our conference. Now we can see the list and say this is where we need to focus. Maybe they are just looked at or looked at differently.

In addition to the shift in participation and responsibility for planning continued professional education programs from the State Education Department to the teachers association and then to the AEO staff, more recently there has been another change in the relationship between the teachers and the state staff. This recent change in how the teachers and staff work together to plan was shared by Andrew:

We had those sessions where we would sit around and say to the state staff person why don't you try this or maybe you can get this, but we still kind of sit and said the state staff would take care of it....It has only been in the last couple of years where the teachers have been really involved in the whole planning process.

Now he sees that "the teachers involved in the process have more ownership in it and are therefore more concerned about making sure that they spread the word" to encourage other teachers to participate in the conference and to offer ideas for conference workshops. This commitment to collaboration between state staff and the teachers was reflected in the way both groups interacted during their meetings. Everyone in the meeting asked questions, exchanged comments, or discussed particular points as they considered all aspects of the issues they discussed including costs, location, and other educational interest in the conference area.

The teacher members of the planning committee and NYAAE Board spoke very strongly about the value they placed on the work the state staff members did to provide leadership and assist with the continuing professional education planning. Christine recognized that:

They all are involved in everything, every step of the way. And they have perspectives that are outside of teachers because that is not their full-time commitment, so it is nice to have those perspectives brought in. They know of resources that we don't know of and stuff like that so they present it. They don't bulldoze their way, they just give us what the possibilities are and everybody works together. I think that it is a really great working group.

Within the planning committee the members recognize that Lynn is a part of the team but cannot do everything for the group. Andrew observed that:

One person working half-time, it is very difficult for one person to find all of the people to do all of these workshops and also make all of the arrangements for like hotels, meals and all the other parts of the conference so the committee, part of our job is to find the people to do the workshops or help out with, what do you think about this kind of schedule?

Thomas agreed stating that "working together as a team to try to help out--that is the biggest thing." As a part of the team Andrew elaborated on the teachers' relationship with Lynn explaining that at times they asked, "we've got this idea and here is what we want to do, find somebody. Sometimes she does and sometimes she comes back to us and says I am drawing a blank here guys, can you help out?" Andrew believed "that makes the conference better and... relieves the pressure on the person we hire to help us with this because now some of that leg work is done that would become more difficult for her to do while she is trying to work on the other things." As a new member of the Board, Jean shared her appreciation for Lynn who "is very good about more or less delegating who is going to be doing what, and the officers are very good at distributing everything of who needs to do what." Thomas

and other teachers in the planning committee appreciated that “there is a lot of behind the scenes work and that is where Lynn really is admirable. She really goes above and beyond.”

While the Board spoke about working closely with Lynn, Theresa explained that the group did not work as closely with the Director of the Ag Tech Prep project, the project that provided funding for the workshop materials as well as other activities. The negotiation that occurred between the teachers and the Ag Tech Prep Director was shared by Mary:

If we have an idea that we think would be a good idea for tech prep to fund we have to sell it to the Director because he’s got the money, but he doesn’t just want to throw his money away or throw the grant money away, so we have to prove whatever our ideas are they are worth funding. So it is definitely not driven by the Director because he has the money, and I think that is really good from his standpoint, but he wants to make sure that the money is well spent so he takes the ideas that people have and he wants to verify that it’s a good use of the grant money and is a good fit with the grant and with what the grant said it is supposed to do.

In addition to assisting with the conference funding, Andrew recognized that the Ag Tech Prep Director sometimes has ideas for presenters and says “hey, I heard this particular person somewhere, and you ought to take a look at what they are doing.” The work of the planning committee and the relationships between the teachers and state staff was summed up by Jean as she explained, “it kind of just happens. It’s weird, I think that because we are all professionals and know how to delegate, I’ll do this and you’ll do that, I think that it kind of just happens, and we all pull together at the end. That is just a good outcome usually.”

During the meeting of the NYAAE Board in October, the full group approved the date for the conference and the region of the state in which to conduct the conference. The development of the remaining details of the conference program specifics were assigned to the professional development planning committee. Three teachers, Andrew, Theresa, and Thomas as well as Lynn, were appointed to the professional development planning committee. This committee was charged with the responsibility for developing the detailed conference plans and reporting their plans back to the NYAAE Board for final approval at a spring meeting. Later Jean volunteered to join the committee and assist with the conference planning activities.

According the NYAAE meeting records and teacher interviews, this committee has been responsible for the details of the program planning for the last two years. Andrew provided insight into the committee's history stating that "most of this planning committee has evolved as a result of that internet survey that we did". He went on to explain:

I think part of it was when we saw the volume of stuff we got back from that survey, we looked at it and said as a Board we cannot sit down and go through four pages of ideas and come up with something. Let's let a group [of us] spend a day here and a day there looking at how can we partial this out and figure it out. We basically decided that the information we got back was going to be a three or four year project. We saw the need for a committee based upon strictly the volume of stuff we got back. No one person could sit and look at all of that stuff [and] even hope to sort it all out.

The document generated from the web based teacher survey was 17 pages in length and identified a very broad spectrum of topics of teacher interests within the umbrella of agricultural education curriculum (Appendix P). The committee

conducted their work through regular meetings that occurred in conjunction with other agricultural education activities to reduce the time and travel pressures for the committee members. For example, the November meeting was held during an FFA youth leadership program at Cornell University while the January meeting was conducted at another FFA youth leadership event in Syracuse. On both occasions the teachers in the planning committee were already bringing students to the FFA program. According to Andrew the committee sometimes met at “the spur of the moment because we are all going to be in the same place for something FFA related something or other, [so] can we get together for a few minutes and talk, much like we did a couple of weeks ago for the November meeting.” In addition to the regular meetings, the planning committee also had two conference calls and exchanged several group emails. Informal discussions among the planning committee members also occurred prior to the October Board meeting. Andrew explained that there had been “talking amongst the group when we would run into each other over July and August” indicating that some of the planning began before any formal decisions about the conference had been introduced to the Board or planning committee. At each of the committee meetings the group welcomed additional teachers to join in on their discussions. This invitation resulted in an additional teacher joining in at each meeting.

The teachers described their Board and planning committee’s communication as having both formal and informal components, as Andrew indicated it included:

Lots of emails, conference calls, probably one or two meetings during the year. I know that within the committee there is at least one meeting where we get together someplace and spend a whole day going through things. We talk and constantly rotate through all of the possibilities for workshops, lots of email back and forth, a few conference calls.

Mary referred to a recent conference call as an example of the planning committee's communication efforts:

When the committee wanted ... feedback from more people than just their committee, they contacted us via email and let us know the situation, let us know some of the issues.... they gave us the background in the email and then the conference call Monday night. It was a very good conference call. I was thinking how much better it was to have an hour and a half conference call than to drive four hours to sit down for a couple of hours and drive home.

Unfortunately not all of the committee members appreciate the use of conference calls instead of emails or meetings. Both Jean and Thomas expressed concerns. First, Jean found that she was notified of a conference call with too short of a notice to make changes in her teaching plans because "one conference call was kind of, we are going to have a conference call the next day thing so it was like – oooo," it was difficult to work it into her teaching schedule. Thomas shared his concern that:

I feel that over the phone with 20 people or 15 people ... it's just not an effective means of meeting and I feel that it doesn't progress much. Basically everybody just report[s], we will make a few decisions, and we will move on but nobody has a chance to get their input in. I guess that is one thing about conference calls, you really can't hear what other people are going to say too because they are a little shy about sharing their opinions. That is why I would rather have face-to-face.

The limitations of using conference calls with this group were evident when only Andrew and Lynn participated in the first conference call on November 8th. Even the second conference call a week later resulted in the participation of only six of the 15 Board members.

Within the committee there appeared to be an active exchange between members as they tried to look at the positive and negative issues with each of the options the group considered for the conference location and accommodations. According to Theresa this process took “a lot of brainstorming. That is how we started out. We needed to figure out what people wanted to do, what they wanted to learn about,” and then:

We were actually thinking of people we wanted to see present. One reason was to get them to the conference and two, they are excellent teachers in certain areas so we were thinking you know, ok we want plant science, who would be good at grafting? Then we came up with a name of who could do this. So that was part of the thing we did. Our knowledge of the teachers in the state helped with that.

While the Board members admitted that the planning activities may take longer because of the involvement of additional people, the shared communication responsibilities between the staff and teachers established the teachers as active participants in the planning process. Andrew reinforced this point:

Everybody outside of the teachers is very supportive, and if a teacher or a couple of teachers say “hey we ought to be doing....this particular topic” the general attitude has been that, if you guys think this is a topic that we should be doing then we should be doing it. We have representatives on the NYAAE Board that are very supportive of anything that we want to try to do within a little bit of reason....Most of the time I think when, lets say the professional development committee says, “we think this would be a really good workshop and why,” then everybody else on the Board is like, yep- you are right.

The teachers strongly agreed that the success of the recent workshops was due to the fact that teachers and other professionals worked together to identify both the workshop topics and the specific presenters. The teachers not only considered it important to have the diversity of organizations or other agricultural education groups participating in the professional development planning, they also valued having a variety of new teachers join the NYAAE Board to bring new ideas and perspectives. According to Andrew, “you bring in new people every year and you get other people interested. I think as long as we bring in somebody new, somebody young, somebody with new ideas that is the easiest thing to do” to keep the Board fresh and engaged in developing new ideas. The Board has made an effort to have new people join as evidenced by the two teachers serving their first year and two serving their second year of service during this study (Table 2). Several of the new members serving as regional representatives have had some concerns about what the group expected each of them to contribute to the planning work. According to Jean there had been some confusion in the past regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Board members as she shared, “I was really unsure what my role was as a regional representative, and it was really unclear, it wasn’t explained what I was supposed to do but now, in the second year, I understand more of where we want to be and what we want to do.” However, according to the NYAAE Constitution and Bylaws (Article II. Section E) the Regional Representatives shall:

1. Keep all region members informed of recommendations and actions of the Executive Committee.
2. Promote professional membership and coordinate a membership drive in his/her respective region.
3. Recruit and promote NYAAE Leadership positions.

This appeared to indicate that the new Board members had not reviewed the Constitution, and other leaders in the group have not made a point to encourage them to do so. Both Jean and Elizabeth agreed that this year there seemed to be more direction and guidance for the newer Board members. Jean indicated that this year “communication is great because the president has been very good about sending everything out. Lynn, an [AEO] state staff member, sent all kinds of things out so communication-wise we are always pretty active.” With the improved guidance for the new Board participants, Jean explained that she felt she contributed to the work of the Board “as a younger teacher coming in with a new program, just with some new ideas and new energy to the group.” Both Jean and Elizabeth made suggestions regarding the change of the dates for the conference program during the October meeting. Jean also volunteered to join one of the planning committee meetings in November where she contributed to the discussion of the ideas for workshop topics and potential teachers to facilitate workshops. Throughout the interviews, teachers indicated that one of the greatest assets the Board had was the diversity of perspectives the individuals brought to the discussions of professional development and the respect each experienced themselves and extended to others.

When it came to developing ideas for the conference program, Andrew described the relationship between the teachers and the state staff

I think a lot of the ideas are generated by the teachers on the committee and teachers in the field who make suggestions to us. Then we depend on the state staff a lot to find ways to do it. Sometimes it is the teachers who know them, sometimes it is Lynn who knows them, [and] sometimes the Director of Ag Tech Prep knows them. It is kind of like a whole group collaborative effort, and I think it’s that back and forth that has helped make improvements in our conference.

Jean agreed explaining “I think we did very well. We really worked well together and kind of, everybody had ideas of what they wanted and everybody’s ideas were shared and respected.” Furthermore Thomas emphasized that “working together as a team to try to help out that is the biggest thing. If we don’t work together as a team on this project then we are going to have 80 teachers in New York that will not be showing up. We need to work together.” Finally, Andrew attributes the success of the recent conferences to the dedication of the teachers in the planning committee:

I think that a lot of it in the past two or three years has been the people involved have a real interest in that particular area so it has been easy for us to have this committee. I think that as long as we keep a nucleus of people that are really interested in that and as long as we keep getting teachers who are willing to step up and say I will teach a workshop. Then it starts to come together quite easily.

The other teachers on the Board described the communication as a cooperative effort between the state staff and teachers. As Jean shared, “basically that is between [Lynn] and [Andrew]. They pretty much do a lot of who is going to be doing what. They work really well together which is great. I think that is basically where everything comes from because they work so well together.” During the Board and planning committee meetings both Andrew and Lynn took turns introducing information to the groups, and they each provided guidance as the group reviewed various materials related to the selection of the conference location and the program format. This shared leadership was evident during formal Board and planning committee meetings as well as during the conference calls. As Theresa observed:

Most of the business that we do is over email or over conference calls to begin with and anybody who sits on NYAAE [Board] has the ability to be involved in those. And because of those meetings or conference

calls, I think that gets interest in people. We offer anybody who wants to be on this committee is welcome to be on it. If you want to be on it that is fine. People have multiple interests. So I think that would be the easiest way as long as we keep doing the conference calls and keep doing the meetings.

The shared communication and leadership responsibilities were also reflected in the distribution of tasks between the teacher president and the staff. Andrew assumed the responsibility for communicating directly with the teaching community by distributing information on the state-wide agricultural education list serve as well as initiating personal conversations with specific teachers. In contrast, Lynn was responsible for communicating with the staff at the conference location and hotels, as well as those individuals that were selected to present portions of the conference program and workshops.

The current planning structure, involving a mix of teachers, state staff, and university faculty on the NYAAE Board was the result of a series of changes in the state's agricultural education leadership structure and the availability of state funding. It was only recently that the Board made changes in the balance of teacher and state staff involvement in planning decisions and responsibilities. With these recent changes, teachers have assumed a stronger leadership role of the continuing professional education program content decisions while still benefiting from the external staffing and funding support through the AEO and Ag Tech Prep projects.

This Board and planning committee created systems of communication for both within the group and with external stakeholders in an effort to address concerns with the traditional continuing professional education program for the secondary agriculture teachers. Throughout the interviews the teachers described how the Board and planning committee effectively used both formal and informal means of

communicating between the group members to exchange ideas and represent the interests of other teachers. These communication efforts were evident in the emails exchanged between the teachers on the Board and the planning committee as well as the emails between these groups and the state-wide agricultural education community. The teachers attribute much of their planning committee's success to the cooperative and collaborative relationships they have developed with both Lynn and the Director of the Ag Tech Prep project and what they see as good communication between everyone in the planning committee and on the NYAAE Board.

Increased Influence of Teachers on the Program Format

Theme: Over time teacher participation in the planning work resulted in fundamental changes in the continued professional education conference format and focus.

Individuals on the NYAAE Board and planning committee did not always have a positive opinion about the conference workshops and program format. As the group members shared their reflections on their early participation in the conference, five of the teachers stated that as new teachers attending the conference they had felt isolated or disconnected from the other participants. For example, Mary explained "my first ATANY [now NYAAE] conference was in a hotel in Utica. I was in the hotel by myself because I did not know anybody else, and you made your own hotel reservations." The teachers agreed that this feeling of isolation amplified their positions as new teachers, and at times they found it also limited their opportunity to interact with experienced teachers and develop a network of peers that they could use as a support in their local teaching practice. As Theresa reflected on her first conference she remembered:

I really enjoyed the conference but I enjoyed the camaraderie of the conference a lot more than I enjoyed the workshops. If you asked me what specific workshops I went to, I could not tell you one. I could

remember going on the ROPES course with the other teachers, and I remember going canoeing and kayaking with the other teachers, but to me it was important to have that group interaction. That was what made me comfortable at the end of my first year.

The teachers shared that these early conference experiences had a strong influence on their current planning work. As Theresa explained, “when we sat down as a group and we thought about ways that people could interact, that was my big push. We needed to have interaction.” They did not want new teachers who attend today’s conferences to feel isolated and alone. They want them to feel like they are part of a larger profession in which they could rely on their fellow professionals to help them when they needed assistance.

In addition to the concerns about individual isolation at the conference, the teachers explained that during previous conferences there had been too much top-down directed sessions, specifically “a couple of years ago we were getting too much Cornell interaction, too much of the university” (Theresa). According to the 2005 conference program Theresa was referring to, ten of the 15 total workshops were presented or facilitated by university faculty or staff. The teachers felt “they were being sold the university” information “instead of being educated about agriculture in general” and according to Theresa the teachers freely shared these concerns with the NYAAE Board and planning committee. These concerns lead to the planning committee’s efforts to find teachers who were willing serve as facilitators for a majority of the workshop sessions. “That was what we were trying to work on having teachers teach teachers because that is what they seemed to really want” (Theresa). Thomas expressed that a similar concern motivated him to become a part of the NYAAE Board and planning committee:

The reason I got involved with it was as a teacher or as an educator is the understanding that we go to an inservice, we see a lot of times new data coming at us...it is all in a lecture and in the agriculture field we obviously cannot do that all of the time. We have hands on. Don't put them in a little room, close the blinds and throw on a PowerPoint from a professor that tells us something that a lot of us knew....Everybody is sleeping. Don't do that again....I think that there are enough of us on this committee that have had experience with bad conferences and good conferences. We know what works for good conferences. I am saying that for New York agriculture teachers, the model that we're looking for is traditionally hands on, they want something positive. They want something out of this.

As the teachers on the NYAAE Board shared these concerns and their experiences at previous conferences, they explained how these concerns lead them to rethink their beliefs about their roles in the planning process and their understanding of the purpose of the conference.

As the experienced teachers on the NYAAE Board told of how they really became involved in the conference planning, each shared their story about a specific informal and unofficial meeting that was held two years earlier on a summer evening in Lynn's basement family room. A group of six teachers from the NYAAE Board all happened to be at the agricultural education State FFA camp with their students, and they decided to meet together to visit about the conference that had taken place the previous month. Theresa told of how the conversation unfolded:

We were all NYAAE officers at the time and we all go to camp the same week so what a better time to sit down and start planning the conference than when the kids are off doing a dance or whatever. We

were all there and none of us live that close to Oswegatchie [the State FFA camp] so it was easier to do it then. It was the middle of July and we figured, sitting down in the basement of her [Lynn's] house, we would just come up with some ideas, what we can do better. That is when we started going back over those feedback lists that she had. With that feedback list she kind of went through it step by step. We got to watch some video of the conference, and we could see the interaction between people. We could see what they enjoyed, and what they didn't enjoy. That year there was a lot of negatives about the conference. Teachers don't have any problem telling their opinion on things....If they didn't like what was going on one, we are not going to get them to the conference, and they are not going to be excited about it, and too, as a group, NYAAE is not doing their job of educating the teachers. So we did a total 360 from that conference. It was, the term stuffy is coming into my head, but that is not what I think it really is, it was much more professional and business-like. Business-like would be the better term there. We went to the group interaction conference the following year and people loved it. The other problem we have is that just in human nature, we are cliquish, and when you are not forced to go outside of your box and work with other people, you don't get to know them. When we started on the next conference, the Oswegatchie conference, one of the big pushes we had was to really have teachers work together. There was some animosity on the state level from people. By chance, Lynn's favorite show was *Survivor* so I don't remember but I think a commercial came on for *Survivor* and she freaked out, 'I love *Survivor*.' We started talking that we could have

Survivor Oswegatchie. It was not a conference based idea at that point; it was a 'wouldn't that be great to do at camp' sort of thing. It kind of morphed from there. We were talking about conference and somebody, it might have been [another former committee member], made the comment about, 'well why couldn't we do something *Survivor Oswegatchie* for ag teachers?' We started talking about that and what it would entail and one of the comments that were on the comments cards was that they did not feel there was enough group interaction. So, I am pretty sure I said this, but it was a basement meeting with beer, so it could have not been me but one of us made a comment that we really needed to do group interaction. If we were doing this why couldn't we work in teams, why couldn't we have a great race for *Survivor*, why couldn't we do *Survivor* kinds of activities like eating strange foods, working on your own. It just kind of developed from there, and that was how it started. Then one of the university faculty members got very interested in it, and he picked it up a little bit later on when he was doing his tribal council activity. By that point we had already developed the activities that we were going to have, and they weren't like my first year of camp where it was going to be four hours of free time here and two hours of free time here, and you can go off in a group and do this. That was not what we wanted. The reason we did not want that was because if you didn't know people, it didn't help you. We really wanted people to work together and to be forced to work together and that is what the survivor theme did. They had to sit down with their team and make a flag. They had to sit down with their team and come up with who was going to do this part of the great race. That

is what we really wanted. I can't thank the Oswegatchie enough either because (their staff) did a tremendous amount of planning.

Thomas provided more insight into the planning committee's concerns and motivations as he explained:

There are a lot of young teachers in our state and there are quite a few experienced teachers in our state and then there is the middle of the road that have been teaching for 5 to 15 years and it seems to be that these teachers would kind of separate. At workshops they would all just talk at a table, they would look around the room, and they would not know too many [other people] or they would know them but really not know them. We as a committee thought about this and thought about how many young teachers there are, and how do we get them involved to talk with experienced teachers as kind of a mini-mentoring session... We randomly selected teachers, there was not hand picking of any, we just put all the names on a computer excel sheet and hit sort and boom, we took those names and broke them out into teams. Then we had to get the workshops geared so that they had to work together.

As a result of the basement meeting the annual conference program was redesigned to encourage teachers to work together in their teams during specific activities. According to the 2006 conference program materials there were five sessions, nine hours in total, devoted to activities in which the teachers had to work with their teams to accomplish a team challenge. In 2007 the program included four sessions that totaled seven hours. These teams were sorted to include student teachers, new teachers, experienced teachers, university faculty, and state staff. During the 2006 conference, the teams were provided with color-coordinated bandanas that were designed and silk screened by students in Theresa's agriculture program; while teams

at the 2007 conference were given t-shirts in their team color. Teams were awarded points for their success in specific events and members of the winning team in 2006 were awarded digital cameras to utilize in their local agriculture programs (2006 Conference CD-Rom). In 2007 the winning team members were each given an iPod to integrate into their classroom instruction (2007 evaluation results).

The new program model included specific changes that encouraged teacher interaction and time in the program to share ideas during the workshops and other sessions. These changes included scheduling three workshop sessions two times each to allow for a small group learning environment and space for individuals to participate in the hands on activities that were imbedded in each session (2006 & 2007 Conference Registration Forms). Each team of teachers was lead by an NYAAE Board member. During the conference registration, pictures were taken of each team member to help people learn each other's names. The pictures, labeled with the person's name and school, were grouped by teams and posted on a wall in a common area near where the meals were served. This area also included a large score board where the event results were posted (2006 Program CD-Rom). Theresa explained how she helped create the photo display:

It was my idea to have the Polaroid camera and take pictures of everyone so that we could have a wall. So I went on line and I bought all of the stuff so that they could make the big display board and have that stuff there.

The final component of the conference, the Tribal Council, called for teachers to share teaching ideas within their teams and within the larger conference group. Throughout the planning, an effort was made to connect the components of the conference with pieces of the theme and to the team events. Theresa said, "The only

drawback to the fact of it was that some people thought it was a little too competitive. We had that comment three times on our feedback sheets, out of 90 responses.”

Members of the NYAAE Board shared that they were excited about the new program model and the opportunities it provided for teachers to work together, learn from each other, and build relationships. However, individuals on the planning committee, including Thomas, had been nervous about how their peers would respond to the new program plan:

What made me nervous was, what was the end result going to be? Are these teachers going to come in and say no, we refuse to be part of the teams? No, we drove five and a half or six hours to get here, now you want us to do this, this, and this?

As a result of their concerns he emphasized that “we as a committee, we really worked hard ahead of time to get the message out in a positive manner that this is a fun thing.” The planning committee recognized that the new format needed to be sold to the other teachers, and it had to be sold by the teachers on the NYAAE Board.

Based on the feedback at the conclusion of the conference, teachers appreciated the new format. As a result of the success with the new program model, the planning committee in this study focused on ensuring that the facilities for the next conference supported the critical components of the model and that the program reflected the interactive features the teachers had appreciated in the previous conferences. However, because of the move to a hotel facility, the planning committee chose to suspend the team activities for the 2008 conference. The planning committee’s focus on meeting these needs within the current program were reflected in Thomas’ concerns during the October planning meeting:

Put yourself in the shoes of either a new teacher or a teacher who hasn’t been at conference in lets say, 10 years, and we get them talked into

going to this conference. Which one would be the image that they are going to remember that is going to give them the positive experience to say: hey, I want to go again?

The successful 2006 and 2007 conferences were considered heavily in planning the 2008 conference. In an interview after a planning meeting, Thomas clarified what he was looking for as he helped select the 2008 conference facility:

I am looking for: are they happy with the rooms, are they happy with the hotel, are they happy with the meeting space, or are we cramming 50 people into a ten by ten room, and somebody is trying to give us a presentation? I am interested in knowing is there a relaxing time at night where teachers can get away from their teams for a few minutes and visit with their friends....If we do not present that type of meeting facility we will not have people coming back to this conference. This conference will die.

The planning committee spent a significant amount of time during their meetings considering their hotel options for the conference location. The initial discussion began during the October meeting and continued into November with two additional conference calls. Throughout this discussion teachers emphasized the concerns illustrated in Thomas' comments.

The planning committee considered their experiences from the 2006 and 2007 conferences as they decided on the 2008 conference facilities and their need for space for workshop sessions with hands-on activities. Since these activities might require additional space, access to water or outdoor space the planning committee looked for those options at each of the hotel locations. The teachers in the committee specified the importance of the hands-on workshops as a means of providing technical updates necessary for teachers to remain current with changes in the agriculture industry.

Thomas, as well as others in the NYAAE Board, emphasized that the teachers had been very specific in their requests on previous conference surveys, “if you look at the surveys, if you look at what the teachers want, that is what they want, the hands-on workshops.” Christine added that “it [all workshops at the conference] doesn’t always work for everybody but everything is geared toward useful things that we can take back to the classrooms and use.” Theresa provided a specific example from the previous conference:

They [conference participants] learned how to do the structures, to do the trusses, how to do everything. Teachers left that particular workshop with the knowledge of being able to go back to their area and build a building. That to me was great....The physical hands-on....Once you start doing it, you are learning it in more than one way, and you are going to learn it better.

In previous years teacher feedback about the conference workshops had included concerns that there were not enough hands-on technical workshop sessions to meet their needs and interests (Appendix Q). In particular teachers were interested in technical updates that demonstrated how the new information could be integrated into existing courses or developed into new courses. Andrew shared how challenging this expectation could be:

If we suddenly went to a PowerPoint or dog and pony show we would probably get drawn and quartered and hung out in the square. Ag teachers don’t sit so we constantly have to come up with workshops that will keep teachers active and that can sometimes be a challenge. In some of the areas to find workshops that meet the needs in some of the areas is an adventure as well.

The other teachers were not the only ones who wanted to experience interactive workshops, Theresa admitted, “I hate sitting in workshops that are not hands-on. It’s just a very negative, well I am bored.” Her appreciation for hands-on experiences during instructional sessions reflected in her participation in the planning meetings. For example, in the November planning committee she offered a critique of one possible educational session at the Cornell University Agriculture Field station by suggesting, “I have been on that tour, and it is not very hands-on, but they might be able to make it hands on.” Later in the meeting Theresa suggested a teacher with a background in grape production could do a workshop on viticulture where:

Even if it is learning about trimming back grape vines and that kind of stuff. We did grafting this year, we could do pruning of plants and more of the upkeep and growth. I mean we do grafting last year, but a big thing with viticulture is grafting so we could look at how they graft and why they grow the way they do and root stock and that kind of stuff.

She was a very active participant in the discussions about workshop topics and possible presenters. In particular, she was critical of the workshops offered at the national NAAE conference in Las Vegas, and she was cautious about which of those sessions could be applicable to the state program.

As the planning committee reviewed the feedback from the recent teacher discussions during the previous summer agricultural events, they recognized that some teachers had expressed concerns with the technical update format of the conference. Specifically comments from the teacher discussions referred to by the NYAAE Board as the *fireside chats* included:

- concerns about the shotgun approach to workshop topics,

- observations that the take home content was too light for some teachers,
- concerns about how much of the material was used in individual programs, and
- the concern that if the topics were all one subject the number of teachers who participate will not increase.

Mary's response was, "as busy as we are and as much as I like conference it would be a struggle to have more than one a year....So we jam pack and have an awesome conference and try to get as many agriculture teachers there as possible. I think that is really beneficial." During the meeting observations, the overwhelming perspective was that the majority of the teachers wanted hands-on technical updates that they could immediately integrate into their instruction. The need for the annual opportunity to learn about new material in agriculture was emphasized by Stephanie as she explained:

Kids are going to go on to college, they are going to go on to jobs and stuff, but what I was teaching back then, there is just so much more. I mean yes, they can go back and they could work [in] agriculture production and that kind of thing, but there is so much more out there for the kids career wise that they need to be aware of that there are majors in something other than agriculture production. I think that is one of the things that just having an awareness you can start guiding and getting the kids ready for and if you are not aware of what is out there, you are not going to be able to get kids ready for what is out there. So if I am not aware that there is even a turf grass major or being able to get to at least expose them to it in classes, I think I am just doing them a disservice. I think this is where the conference comes in.

Andrew agreed, observing that “as rapidly as the industry keeps changing and we keep having new and different things we have to learn about...I don’t ever see it running out of topics.”

With the changes in leadership and responsibility for planning the annual continuing professional education conference for agricultural education in New York State have come changes in the conference program. As the teachers in this study shared, at times the program has offered little relevant resources or educational experiences for their teaching practice. However, over the last several years the development of a collaborative planning committee that includes secondary and postsecondary agricultural education professionals as well as state staff members and other leaders in agricultural education appears to have created an opportunity for teachers to have a positive influence on the program design which is supported by the staff and resources necessary for a positive educational experience for participating teachers. The new model offers multiple workshop options in each session, presentations by teachers teaching teachers, and an emphasis on hands-on learning activities that may be transferable to a local agriculture program.

Responsibility for the Profession

Theme: As a part of their planning work, the teachers see themselves as having a responsibility for the future direction of the profession.

As members of the NYAAE Board, the teachers in this study had very clear goals they hoped to achieve for their profession through the activities and design of the annual continuing professional education conference. During the interviews teachers explained their concern that communication between teachers and between teachers and other professionals “is one of our State’s downfalls” (Theresa) in agricultural education. In addition to the communication issues, the teachers also expressed a desire to design continuing professional education activities that

encouraged teachers to work in groups to build trust and collegiality among the team members. Furthermore, teachers on the NYAAE Board saw the annual continuing professional education conference as an opportunity to help themselves and other agriculture teachers experience workshops that could provide them with practical tools and knowledge to integrate new technology into their classroom instruction.

The teacher planners created the new conference program model in an effort to improve both communication and trust within the profession. Christine explained that the team concept worked to address the communication and trust issues because “you talk to people you probably wouldn’t talk to because everybody stays in their own little groups pretty much, so it forces you to work as a team and meet with these other people. That has been good because you don’t do that otherwise.” Furthermore, according to Theresa

It makes you start depending on each other. I think that for a lot of teachers you become an island unto yourself because I will give you my situation....I did that recently. I had a question about [a parliamentary procedure issue] that my students couldn’t figure out so on our list serve I just sent out an email explaining that this was the situation and can somebody help me find the answer. I don’t think that if I didn’t know these teachers in the state as well, I don’t think I would be willing to do that. But I got feedback from 22 teachers, some of them just said, good luck I hope you find your answer, but it was the support network that was there.

The teachers in the planning committee were excited about the progress they believed they were making to improve the communication and trust between their professional peers.

Teachers in the planning committee were confident that the application of the conference workshop materials in the local agricultural education programs might have a direct impact on the curriculum focus of the individual programs through changes in existing courses or the addition of new courses based on the resources provided through the various workshops. Andrew remarked that:

The purpose of our conference would be to update our teachers on some of the more recent innovations to help provide professional development. To help a teacher add some things to their classes because they are being shared by other teachers so they are already getting things that are proven to work. There are not many workshops that we have had in the last seven or eight years that I would say I didn't use somewhere. Our conference tends to be the shotgun approach where you try to cover small things in a lot of areas because we have such diverse teachers. We have teachers that are generalist like myself [sic] who teach five or six different classes, we have people who specialize specifically in mechanics, so we have to do things that can be used by everybody.

In addition to the specific curriculum influences of the program, Andrew and others in the planning committee shared that they believed that the integration of different professionals representing teachers, postsecondary, state staff or others in the planning work had an influence on how the members of the profession interacted and collaborated to provide educational programs for students. Andrew's perspective was that this collaboration provided a balance of information as well as a balance of who were perceived as the experts on a given topic,

If...the planning for professional development happens lets say, at the land grant college, and you start to get high school teachers involved in

it, obviously there would be state staff involved anyhow...you start to get a little broader view. I think that the relationship may develop better from the point of view of the local teachers, their relationship with state staff, or with the land grant people, or with the ag and tech people, or whatever it happens to be. If they work together on developing this project and then they work together a little bit more at a conference, that networking that is going on...if I was sitting in a workshop and one side of me is somebody from one of the ag and techs and there is a business guy teaching this workshop and now it doesn't seem so daunting, I get on the phone and I call that guy at the land grant college or at the ag and tech because I met him. Where often times when, I am just thinking what it could be, if only the people at the land grant colleges are planning it all then they are always the ones always up front and you never get that interpersonal contact that you might get when they are sitting next to you and somebody else is up there, maybe another teacher is up there or maybe there is an ag business person up there. I think a lot of the conference has to deal with the networking that goes on and if everybody is involved a little bit in the planning then there is a lot more networking....I think sometimes that can happen if one group is in charge of doing all of the planning, whether it be the land grant or the state staff or whoever. I think...if the teachers see that they have got some of their fellow teachers involved in the planning, they are going to buy in more, they will be more involved, they are going to be more willing to network more, and I think that is ultimately what makes for a much better professional development.

As the planning committee worked to address the needs of the teachers and the profession they shared that there were aspects of the work that were very challenging including: the selection of the conference location, scheduling of the conference at the end of the school year, the cost of the registration, the accommodation of hands-on workshop formats in the program schedule, as well as the program's flexibility to address the needs of the diverse group of teachers who were attending the conference program. It was especially interesting to learn how much the NYAAE Board and planning committee struggled with the decision to move the conference from the [Camp Oswegatchie] to a hotel or conference facility in another part of the state. The traditions and personal attachment to the leadership facility felt by the committee members and the other teachers in the profession created a hurdle for those in the committee who wanted to look at utilizing the Experiment Station research facilities for the educational program.

In response to the NYAAE Board's discussion about changing the scheduled dates and location of the conference, Mary's reaction was that "change is good. Going to different places, I had never been to western New York before that conference that was at the other end of the world....camp is great but it is good to change it up a little bit." For Andrew a significant consideration for the location was the limitations of the facility to provide a variety of workshop experiences. He admitted that:

There are certain things we can't do at camp. It would be very difficult for us to do a computer workshop, you just can't. It is physically impossible....Now we are looking at envisioning this year away and then two years at camp, then the fourth year we are going to be out at our resort type area because that is the year we have the regional conference so we actually are now looking long-range at professional development, at least as far as the location.

Christine concurred:

There is always something that is going to be lost because you can not accommodate everything....Location is always a big thing and cost is a big thing. They try to keep the costs down. Locations, you have got to rotate it around even though it might not make everybody happy because somebody has to travel, but with New York State somebody has got to travel no matter what, as long as it is not always certain sections of that.

Once the NYAAE Board determined that they would not be hosting the conference at the youth leadership facility, the struggle over the specific location continued as the teachers and staff reviewed the hotel options within the area near the university's agricultural field station. Andrew shared his perspective on the planning committee discussion of the hotels:

I think that ultimately we are still going to have to come down to the finances to select the particular hotel. This year, when we looked at facilities, we looked at three hotels in that area, and so far, and two of them have lots of space so we can have the kinds of workshops we often do. But the one that is the closest to the field station and the most centrally located has the least amount of facilities. So now we have to say, how far away can we go if we go to one side or the other? What are the things we can do there? It has been an interesting experience.

In contrast to the NYAAE Board's trepidation over the relocation of the conference to a new site, the decision to change the week of the conference seemed to create far less stress both within the group and in the external teaching community. Andrew was surprised that "other than the two or three early on people who said there

is no way they can come during Regents' week" there were no other comments from teachers regarding the change in the conference date.

The other major area of discussion that challenged the planning committee was the selection of appropriate workshop topics that addressed the teachers expressed needs and included opportunities for teachers to experience new information from the agriculture industry. Jean explained that while this was a typical challenge, she found the group's results addressed the needs of the teachers. She was confident that "it worked pretty well...everybody in our state teaches something different, so it is trying to find new ideas and new curriculum each year to kind of spruce up everybody's program and everyone has something to take home." As an experienced member of the NYAAE Board Andrew proposed that:

As rapidly as the industry keeps changing and we keep having new and different things we have to learn about anyhow, I don't ever see it running out of topics. It is just a matter of, as long as we are finding a way to come up with these activities and if we can continue to find a way, at this point the biggest draw for people is the fact that they can take home so much stuff so as long as we don't run out of a grant and [Ag Tech Prep] keeps assigning money for it I don't see us having a problem putting on some pretty good professional development.

One perspective of the workshops that the NYAAE Board unanimously agreed upon was that they "don't want to change anything about conference as far as materials. What we get, what we bring home" (Mary). However, there did appear to be some contrasting perspectives about the amount of hands-on activities versus instructional time that should be allotted in with workshop sessions. Mary found that after reviewing the feedback in the *fireside chats* that "it is kind of interesting that [teachers had stated that they wanted] no PowerPoint...professional people when they

present they use PowerPoint, and it is just funny that was on there. I think that a lot of our presentations were PowerPoint and hands-on.” Elizabeth recognized that there may be at times where there are differences in the Board’s perspectives and the opinions of the teachers participating in the conference sessions. She emphasized that:

The evaluation process is important and I think it needs to be done every year because that is how you address the needs of the teachers. As a group of eight teachers we think, oh these workshops are exactly what the teachers need and then we get this information back that they were the worst. We need to take that information to get better for the next year. I am seeing that happen in the process....I think that is important to use that information, and it ties in to the eight of us not being the only group of teachers to put input into the conference.

This advice appeared to be working for the planning committee as they combined feedback from teachers, ideas from state staff and teacher leaders who attend other conferences, university faculty and others to develop the annual program.

In addition to the change in the conference program, the planning committee also learned through communications between state staff and individual teachers that a number of teachers who were interested in attending the new conference would not be able to do so because of summer daycare concerns. As Mary explained:

Now it [the profession] is majority women and it used to be majority men. That is a big difference because now with that comes their kids and the issues of being away from home. For some reason women have more responsibility with kids than men do, but that is an issue we have to address as a profession. We are doing a pretty good job. We acknowledge that there are kids there, that we have kids’ programs, babysitting opportunities because we want these young new agriculture

teachers at the agriculture conferences because it is so beneficial. So that is one thing, we want to encourage them to come.

As a result of the teachers' concern, a children's program had been designed for both the 2006 and 2007 conferences to include age appropriate environmental education activities, recreation, time for free choice activities, games, and snacks (2006 & 2007 Conference Registration Materials). The program concluded each day in coordination with the teachers' program schedule. During the 2007 summer program the teachers brought along 28 of their children ranging in age from two months to 15 years old (2007 list of registered teachers and guests). The addition of the children's program, while specifically designed to allow easier attendance by more teachers, may also have influenced how members of the profession attempted to balance their professional career activities and commitments to family and personal priorities (2006 & 2007 evaluation feedback).

Mary also shared another concern the Board faced particularly as they developed the new program model:

We need to make sure we have time for our veteran ag teachers to meet and talk and visit with the new ag teachers so that they can make those same connections, and we can help them through their first few years, which we know are tough. So as a profession we have a very important job as veteran ag teachers to keep those young ag teachers connected.

This emphasis on connecting with new professionals and developing a support networks among peers appeared to be a response to what teachers described as their own personal experiences of isolation both in their own agriculture programs and as new participants in previous professional development conferences.

The opportunity to influence the profession appeared to be a factor in the decisions teachers made to become involved in the conference planning. When the

teachers spoke about how they became involved in planning, they provided different responses; however five of the individuals (Stephanie, Christine, Elizabeth, Jean, and Thomas) identified other teachers or members of the agricultural education profession as the people who encouraged them to pursue a position on the NYAAE Board and the planning committee. The three other individuals (Theresa, Andrew, and Mary) decided to participate because of personal reasons that ranged from an interest in the opportunity to meet other teachers to the desire to provide leadership for the educational programs. Because of her previous experience as a former association president as well as her years of teaching experience, Mary was especially concerned about:

The change in leadership, the change in so many new teachers, that this is a good time to step back in so that is kind of where, because of change, a little scary on one side because of the change. I thought, ‘am I crazy to get back involved?’ That is kind of why I thought now is a good time for me and a good time for the state.

The strong influence of the other teachers who encouraged the current teachers to participate in the planning work is reflected in the Board’s approach to recruiting new members. Theresa emphasized the need to recruit new regional representatives in the professional development planning work because:

Those are the people who are usually younger, and if we can get them in and interested, they can move up to president and vice president or whatever then we still have that base group of teachers who know each other and can keep everybody interested and active.

While Stephanie has been involved in the NYAAE Board work for over 15 years and she stated that she enjoyed knowing first-hand what was going on in the profession, she did explain during her Round One, Part One interview that she had

been thinking about stepping down and leaving the Board to open up a space for a new teacher with fresh ideas to join the board and perhaps work on the continuing professional education planning. She believed that maybe she was getting stale and was not helping the group as much as she had in the past. When she was asked about why she had stayed on the Board for so long, Stephanie explained that honestly, she appreciated that “you get first hand information instead of second and third hand information. You don’t have to rely on somebody else to tell you something. You are there, you know, and...you think you are helping.” It is also an opportunity “to get out and see other teachers. It’s a chance to network. It’s knowing, being in the know and helping.”

Christine’s response was similar to that of Thomas and Theresa as she explained:

It is nice to have the opportunity to work developing programs that benefit a lot of teachers or really targets their interests. That really benefits me a lot even though I have been teaching quite a few years, I still feel like there are a lot of new things I learn every time I go and it is such an excellent experience. There are so many things that I can bring back to the classroom and use....It helps a lot that Andrew is the president and I really look at him as a mentor since he has been teaching a long time and has seen and done a lot of things

Both Jean and Thomas expressed their desire to participate as a means of learning themselves. Jean suggested that:

There are always different types of things that we can teach to enhance our programs. You have seen teachers who have been teaching for 30 years who do the same exact thing over and over again. Well, maybe it

is because I am a younger teacher but I get bored with what I am teaching so I want to make sure that I am doing something different.

Thomas explained that “as teachers we are just like our students. We want some hands on as well....We don’t want them to come to a conference or a workshop for professional development, we don’t want them to come there and have nothing they can use.”

The teachers involved in the planning committee expressed a common understanding that one of their primary purposes for the conference was to encourage better communication between individuals and organizations within the state’s agricultural education profession and build relationships for collaboration that can improve the learning experiences for their students. The teachers believed that better communication and cooperation between the different members of the professional community would result in the development of workshops that were relevant for their local agriculture programs. Relevant workshop content was described by the teachers as applicable to the secondary agriculture curriculum, written in a format that was ready to use by the teachers, and engaging to teachers and students through the application of hands-on experiences.

Teachers on the Board described both internal and external motivations to become involved in the conference planning. A majority of the teachers agreed to participate in the planning activities because of encouragement they received from peers who supported them as suitable teacher representatives. The remaining members of the Board sought out the leadership roles as an opportunity to have an influence on the direction of the profession through the development of the conference program.

Throughout the planning process, the teachers expressed concerns about their ability to meet the needs and expectations of their fellow agriculture teachers. The

planning committee appeared to take on the challenges as they made changes in the program format to allow for greater group interaction and communication, provided a children's program to help support teacher's personal and family responsibilities, and designed a team-based format to increase the interaction between new and experienced professionals. The strategies used to address the needs of the teachers were enacted to both increase the teachers' satisfaction with the annual conference as well as their satisfaction with their profession.

Selection of the Conference Components Based on Relevance

Theme: The teachers developed informal planning practices to select potential topics for continuing professional education conference workshops.

The teachers explained that their influence on the program primarily came from their ability to use their range of teaching experiences and content backgrounds during the review of the teacher feedback from previous conference surveys. Specifically Andrew explained, "I come with almost 30 years of experience. I remember things that didn't work as well as things that did work in professional development. I also tend to maybe view some topics as, in a different way than others might because of my years of experience." Mary agreed reflecting that:

Teachers [who] currently are in leadership roles have a lot of history...they know what works and what doesn't work. Or they know what we have done in the past. Maybe it is time to do that workshop again because it has been a while since we have done it....We have to sift through...piles of surveys and piles of ideas and the history that we have, the teachers on the NYAAE have a lot of history...and can provide feedback as well. It is easier because the staff that we have now, have quite a bit of history as well but in the future you don't know

so I think it is important that we bring these teachers in to make sure our staff is going in the right direction.

The teachers articulated their understanding of the 'right direction' as an effort to select workshop topics that could be shared in a way that allowed the topics to be integrated into courses teachers were already teaching to enhance or complement the current curriculum instead of expecting teachers to develop additional courses around the new material presented in a workshop. To Thomas this experience included "bad experiences with previous workshops and conferences." He went on to further clarify that these experiences were:

Not just my own. There are others in my region that I have talked with, you know, on a one-to-one basis that have said 'to be honest with you, the Ellicottville conference, there were just issues there that we did not like it - don't do it again.' Just an informal, one-on-one 'don't do it again.' That presents a challenge.

According to Stephanie this experience was a critical aspect of the program planning work:

We know what we need. It is like, we know what's good. I mean, from 8 o'clock to 3 o'clock in the afternoon we know what we are doing and we know what is going to fit. I had a teacher say a few years ago, I go to these conferences and all we are doing is, we are adding stuff, we are adding stuff. Well, how many things can you add over the course....how much can you add without taking something out? What I think we are doing now is saying that you don't have to take things out, but here is just a better way of doing it. So I think since we are the ones making the decisions, we know that you are not going to take things out but let's see what we currently do and do it a little better or tweak it a

little. I think that is different if you have teachers taking a look at these lists, somebody who is not involved at the teacher level can regulate anything by saying, ‘Wow, here is a great thing that sounds really cool.’ But then you get it and it is not practical because you have got to cut out a whole class or part of a class that is working because it doesn’t fit.

This was reinforced by Thomas’ observation that “we are also in the classrooms; we are also working with the students. The staff isn’t working with the students every day.” As they explained their contributions to the planning work, Andrew emphasized that they were not only using their own classroom experiences but those of the teachers they represented “from the limited conversations we might have with others” such as those Thomas referred to earlier.

Based on the observations in this study, the teachers began their efforts to develop the list of workshops that would be offered in the next continuing professional education conference at the November 17, 2007 meeting. As they developed the list, they identified seven teachers whom they wanted to invite to present workshops on a topics the planning committee thought were in the teachers’ areas of expertise. Stephanie explained why the group felt it was important to seek out teachers as workshop facilitators:

If you have teachers teaching teachers, coming up with the ideas ... I am more likely to implement it than if somebody from someplace says oh, this is what you really need to be doing. I am not going to implement it as much as if it was something that I am buying into because somebody else is using it, and they have a great program, and I really respect this other teacher.

Christine agreed, explaining that teachers could become facilitators several different ways, “they could recommend themselves or someone could recommend them to share a specific lesson so it gave them a chance to shine, I guess, or share innovations that they have done themselves in the classroom.” Andrew emphasized that “our high school teachers are great about sharing. A lot of teachers won’t do that.” He went on:

We had to start looking at how do we provide these [workshops] and that is when we started saying that there are teachers out there that are doing these things already, don’t reinvent the wheel, just find the teachers that are doing this things already and let them teach the teachers. So in recent years more workshops [have been] taught by classroom teachers to other classroom teachers. We still have things coming from Cornell or something from the national FFA which are needed too.

The preferences for teachers providing much of the instruction at the conference came from teacher responses to the online survey described earlier. Theresa said:

We see on our surveys so far is that teachers like to learn from teachers. They don’t necessarily want the professionals to come in and people in the industry to come in because I think they get the impression that they are selling the product....Some states may not feel that way but from what I have learned now, the teachers in New York really don’t want a sales person coming in. It really creates some animosity and negativity in the workshops.

In addition to simply teaching the workshops, a number of the teachers asked to facilitate lessons also prepared kits of materials for each of the participants. As an

example, Theresa spoke about an animal science workshop in which the teacher presenter prepared:

Buckets that she made up with the labs specifically laid out and everything is right there. You know how to do it. And then there is also a list, if you need more of the supply, use this. Sometimes we need to buy more materials, but at least this gives us the physical materials so that when we go home we know where to buy it.

Most recently teacher presenters had reported back to the Board that they were happy that teachers contacted them after the conference for additional information and assistance. One presenter for a tree grafting workshop shared with Theresa that “people [were] sending him emails about grafting, could he send them things, could he help them....and he was so excited that people were excited about what he was teaching.” Mary concurred, “the more teacher participation the better. We have so many good teachers across the state doing good stuff that we need to share more of that....stuff with each other.” As a former presenter herself Jean explained that:

I think the only limitation is, I did a floral demonstration in a workshop one time and if you want to go to something else or see something else [you were unable to participate in other workshops in that same time slot]. But we are pretty good about getting material to each other so ... that is the only limitation I could see.

While the planning committee was excited about the opportunity to have teachers teaching teachers Andrew cautioned,

I think there has to be a mix. It can't be all just teachers presenting “this is what I am doing in my class.” We have got to bring in a few experts from the field or some business people or some college people. But having a good mix, I think, if I were to go to a three-day

conference and all it was, was the experts from Cornell there I might get real tired of it. But if I hear a Cornell person for a couple of hours and then I've got a friend of mine that teaches something at his own high school and then we bring somebody in from business and you get a mix and you get to hear from different people and different views even on the same topic. I think people stick with it and they are willing to try and look at what different people have to say about some of this [topic]. So we can actually end up having several workshops on the same general topic but because they come from different points of view you kind of get a more overall view of a topic and as a result you get a fair and balanced overview that maybe isn't always tilted in just one direction.

To balance out the different types of presenters this year, the Board shifted the conference location to an area near Cornell University's Agriculture Experiment Station so that teachers would have the opportunity to work with the university researchers. Andrew pointed out "the teachers that I have talked to about it at this point seem excited about the fact that they are going to have some different opportunities yet we are still going to have some of the other types of workshops." According to the preliminary list of workshops that were planned at the Cornell University Agriculture Experiment Station, the group intended to offer seven workshops that would be presented by the university researchers and program staff. While the incorporation of the research faculty into the mix of presenters seems to be an acceptable approach this year there is still a strong opinion in the planning committee that industry representatives are not desirable presenters. As the planning committee began to develop an initial list of potential workshops during the meeting in

Las Vegas, they appeared to be very aware of the need to balance the different types of presenters throughout the program.

Along with the heavy emphasis on screening workshops to ensure they were relevant to teachers in their practice, this committee of teacher planners repeatedly reinforced the importance of the ‘take home piece’ that they tried to insure was embedded in each workshop. As Thomas explained, the take home piece could be “an educational piece that they can use in their classroom” or it may be “a different model of how to get across a lesson or how to communicate with a student. Something that the educator can use at their school, use on a personal level.” Theresa agreed:

Some of the best workshops that we have at the ag teachers conference are done by ag teachers because their presentation or their workshop is stuff that works for them in their class, in their school, so it is practical. It is hands-on stuff we can take back to our own classes....We actually hand out stuff to the workshop participants so that they are getting the materials, the handouts, the questions, the tests; but they are also the materials to build the stuff or tests.

Creating the expectation for a ‘take home piece’ in each workshop reinforced the planning committee’s concern that they continue to maintain the partnership with the Ag Tech Prep project that provides the funding necessary for the purchase of the workshop materials. Not only did these materials allow teachers to immediately take back the new ideas and projects to their classrooms without a financial burden on their programs, the teachers saw the resources as a means of demonstrating how they contributed back to their schools. Mary explained her perspective on this contribution:

When you bring hundreds of dollars back to your school it is huge....We have programs that are elective programs so we have to prove our worth in our schools, and we have to prove our worth with

public relations. When we do good things we have to let our school and community know....I am looking at our hydroponics, that was a direct, that project is a direct result of one of our conferences I don't remember how many years ago....I know for a fact when I started my first school I had no materials to start out with and a pathetically tiny budget and I taught with handouts and didn't even have textbooks. So I look back to where I was and where I am now, and the materials I have now are things that I brought back from conferences. Granted, at this school my budget is a lot bigger, but I brought stuff back from conferences that I used, everything from textbooks, pre-made kits, it is incredible the stuff I use. The materials, the outlines, the handouts, teachers that don't go have no idea what they miss. That is kind of sad because they don't understand what a big deal it is and how much they are missing....We've even, our sub-district is going to put our windmills together that we got, it can be a traveling kit so between us we have six or eight of them and each school can use them, package them back up and another school can use them. We can actually take that and make it like a class project so that you don't have to purchase all of the stuff. You have all of the materials for projects.

However potentially important the resources are to the program or beneficial to the school, the teachers appeared to struggle to identify those workshops and resources that really would assist teachers in their local practice. This effort to provide materials had been challenging since these items need to include "more things that you can take home and actually use in the classroom rather than stuff that you are going to stick on a shelf and never use again" (Jean). Since local programs and teaching practices were

so different, the teachers were always concerned about how useful different materials would prove to be once they are taken home.

Teachers on the Board believed that they used their experience in their practice to recognize potential workshop topics that were not specifically on the list of survey results. According to Stephanie:

There are some topics that never show up on a teacher survey but will still have a lot of value...I think we had a great workshop a couple of years ago on literacy. You'll never see that [on a survey], teachers will not say they need a workshop on reading. But that is something that [the university faculty] on the executive Board came up and said this is a valuable workshop, and then it goes and starts to be discussed and it gets to be put on the workshop agenda. So I think there are some things that you are looking at what the teachers want and you are also looking at what we need too because you can't just have all of the fun stuff. I mean sometimes you have to go beyond what you already know because you don't know what you don't know.

The teachers recognized that the diversity of the group, with college representatives and staff, added important perspectives to the planning that could complement or build upon the perspectives of the experienced teacher as they worked collaboratively to accomplish the planning work. Not only did teachers on the NYAAE Board and planning committee believe they contributed to the content and format of the continuing professional education program, they believed that their participation decreased the amount of negative teacher comments about the conference program. Stephanie explained, "It is teachers developing a conference for teachers and it really doesn't give you a whole lot of room to complain because as a teacher you have an opportunity to be on the Board and be a part of the planning process."

Jean emphasized that if the continuation professional education program were “brought down to one person making decisions people would squabble about something saying this isn’t what we really wanted but with all of us teachers there also...no one can say we didn’t get heard. We have representation.” When asked to explain her understanding of her role as a regional representative on the board Elizabeth explained:

Ideally I should pole or get in touch with all of the teachers in my region and get some input from them and supply that input back to the committee so that my job as a representative of a bigger group, that I could take their input and actually give it instead of just being my own person representing the whole group.

While Elizabeth only attended one meeting, she made an effort to represent other teachers when she participated in the October Board meeting discussion about changing the conference date and the potential conflict with state tests and other duties teachers could have during the finals week.

The teachers on the NYAAE Board and in the planning committee strongly emphasized the value they placed on their classroom experience as a resource they drew upon to analyze the feedback from teachers regarding their continuing professional education needs. Members of the Board understood this experience as a critical tool that they brought to the planning work. The teachers explained how they used their experience to help identify teachers who could potentially provide workshops relevant to the needs of teachers who would participate in the conference. Beyond that, the teachers applied their classroom experience to the planning activities as they helped identify the potential take-home pieces that they wanted included in the conference workshops. Finally, the teachers believed that their classroom experience helped them to identify innovative teaching practices or content topics from external

sources (national conferences or university research) that other teachers would find valuable to their teaching practice. As a result of the planning committee’s work, the 2008 continuing professional education program for New York State agricultural education teachers included 19 workshops or tours (Table 5) conducted by secondary teachers, industry representatives, and university faculty or program staff.

Table 5: 2008 Continuing Professional Education Conference Workshops

2008 Workshop Title	Source of Recommendation or Teacher Request for the topic	Presenter
Creating Organics that Work! So what really is organic farming, after all?	Web Based Survey 2006 Agribusiness Topic	Agribusiness Representatives
Unlimited Potential by Starting Your Own Vineyard – Grape Growing: “New York Style”	Web Based Survey 2006 Horticulture	Secondary Agricultural Education Teacher
Learning Global Perspectives in the Ag Classroom	2007 Conference Feedback International Agriculture	Secondary Agricultural Education Teacher
NYS Wine and Culinary Center Food Science Experience	2007 Conference Feedback Food Science	Agribusiness Representatives
Teaching NYSERDA Energy Smart	Web Based Survey 2006 Alternative Energy	NYS Government Program Staff
Investigating Antibiotic Resistance in Animals	Web Based Survey 2006 Animal Science	Secondary Agricultural Education Teacher
Versatile Agricultural Career Pathways in NYS	Web Based Survey 2006 Academic Rigor & Relevance	NYS Career Pathways Program Staff
Activities in Animal Behavior and Respiration	Web Based Survey 2006 Animal Science	Agribusiness Representative
Through the Water, Thinking Like a Lake	Web Based Survey 2006 Environmental Science	Agribusiness Representative

Table 5: Continued

Experiences for Engaging Leadership in the Classroom	Web Based Survey 2006 Integrating FFA and Leadership Development into the Classroom	Secondary Agricultural Education Teacher
Ag Tech Park – Cookies, Cookie Dough, Cherry Juice...Who Knew?	Web Based Survey 2006 Agribusiness Topic	University Research Representative
Name that Pathogen	Web Based Survey 2006 Biotechnology	University Research Representative
Seed Police: Yes, we exist and we're always watching	<i>Not a specific request</i>	University Research Representative
The Chemistry of Aromas	<i>Not a specific request</i>	University Research Representative
Do you want to play plant doctor? Taking a hands-on approach to Plant Disease Diagnostics	Web Based Survey Plant Science	University Research Representative
Let there be Jelly	Web Based Survey Agribusiness Topic	University
The Age of Insects	<i>Not a specific request</i>	University
Agriculture....Meet Technology Infotonics Industry Tour	Web Based Survey Agribusiness Tour	Agribusiness Representative
Wards Biological facilities tour	Web Based Survey Agribusiness Tour & Request to Visit Wards Facility	Agribusiness Representative

Cooperation and Collaboration between Organizations

Theme: The recent success of the continuing professional education conferences was attributed to the cooperation and collaboration among the organizations.

While the planning committee continued to work to develop and improve the new conference format, they appeared to try to incorporate different organizations or groups of agricultural educators into the program activities. According the NYAAE constitution and bylaws, this effort reflects one of the purposes of the organization, “to develop and maintain proper relationships with other organizations and agencies

having compatible objectives.” As the plans developed for the current program, the planning committee was specifically focused on collaborating with the university faculty who were involved in research studies at the Agriculture Experiment Station as well as other agriculture faculty at a regional community college. During the planning process the teachers also expressed a concern regarding the lack of participation from secondary agriculture teachers employed at regional Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) centers. In addition to inviting other groups of teachers to participate, the committee discussed an interest in inviting staff from the Department of Agriculture and Markets to become more of a partner in the program through the support of the planning committee’s interest in including the Culinary Wine and Food Institute in the conference program. This partnership would be in addition to the partnerships the teachers already had established between themselves and the State Education Department, Cornell University, the AEO project, and the New York Ag Tech Prep project through the Association’s representation on the New York State Agricultural Education Leadership Council (Council Bylaws, 2006).

The interest in connecting agricultural education teachers to the Experiment Station researchers and their research projects lead the Board to relocate the conference from the agricultural education leadership training facility to facilities in the central part of the state. Andrew described how he and Lynn initiated their relationship with the faculty and director of the research station as they investigated the opportunities the facility might provide for teacher education workshops.

We just started emailing back and forth. We never had any sort of meeting, other than Lynn and I visiting some hotels and to talk to the people. She had made some preliminary investigations at the field station through, I think she started by contacting a lady who is the assistant director, I am not sure but anyhow. So she knew the lady

from that so she made the contact that then made some contacts. This is how it usually works, you call somebody you know, who calls somebody else and then suddenly you are just rolling in people that you know. But, so by making those contacts she kind of arranged to get together with them. In the meantime ... the Director and his assistant, we met with the two of them in late September. We spent two hours and they showed us around, and they talked about some of the people there that they thought could really relate to ag teachers, as opposed to other researchers, and some of the programs they were running. I think they were kind of, really excited about having us come there, but I am not really sure that they understood what we would be interested in. So they were learning as much from us as we were learning from them.... We've got a nice list of people from that faculty that could do workshops in a wide variety of areas.

Although the planning committee decided to devote a significant portion of the conference time to programs at the Experiment Station, the teachers recognized that they still needed to maintain a balance in the general topics of the workshop sessions. Andrew observed that "the professional development committee has got to look at what other areas do we need, to go beyond the field station to find workshops so that all of the teachers that we have to cover will be happy" since the research at the Experiment Station included only plant science and animal science topics, and the teachers attending the conference would be interested in additional areas of agriculture science.

During the October 13th and November 17th planning committee meetings Andrew and Lynn explained the work they had done to communicate with the staff at the Cornell University Agriculture Experiment Station to identify potential presenters.

It was unclear how the decision had been made to pursue the idea to conduct workshops at the Experiment Station in the annual conference. Andrew presented the idea to the Board at the October meeting and requested the group approve moving the conference to the central New York area to accommodate activities at the Experiment Station. As he introduced the idea of moving the conference he explained:

In looking at some research on places to go [Lynn] and I kind of said that we have this field station in Geneva that we have never used, and it would be real good place to go to do some workshops. So we started looking. She did a lot of online research, I actually went and scouted around one Saturday when [a state staff person] decided all the officers needed to be at Cornell. And we have done some research about things that could be done there; the people at the field station are really excited about the potential of us coming there.

After approximately 30 minutes of discussion, the members of the Board voted to move the conference to the area near the Cornell University Agriculture Experiment Station in an effort to partner with the Experiment Station staff to provide educational workshops for the teachers. In addition to their efforts to partner with the Experiment Station faculty, the planning committee also discussed the need to find a way to invite or involve the faculty at the Finger Lakes Community College located near the Experiment Station. As several of the committee members explained, they had a number of agriculture faculty members from the other agriculture and technical colleges who participated in previous programs either as presenters or participants; however, the Finger Lakes Community College faculty members had never attended any of the continuing professional education conferences with secondary agriculture teachers. To complement the program topics, the committee had regularly invited

postsecondary faculty to present workshops focused on their areas of expertise with an emphasis on an application of the content in a secondary program. Andrew shared:

I think for those of us in the field as secondary teachers, it gives us another outlook because those that come from the ag and techs may have a different take on the topic, and they are free with their ideas. If you talk to some of them, they will share that on a topic and they will explain it is different at their level. I think it is good. It gives them a connection because now if I have a student that is saying ‘I might want to be a vet tech student that may be my area of interest.’ If I have sat and talked with the people from Alfred or Delhi’s vet tech program, it is a lot easier for me to get an idea of their style. I can tell a kid, the programs are about equal but I think you fit better with the staff at say, Alfred or Delhi. You get to know these people, otherwise it is just a picture in a catalog or you have met them in passing someplace. So I think it is very beneficial both ways.

The planning committee recognized that they had a number of faculty members from three of the state colleges attend as participants in addition to serving as conference presenters. Theresa spoke about the concerns they had that “while we do have postsecondary agriculture teachers that come, we really haven’t planned specifically towards those postsecondary educators yet.” During the planning meetings the group members discussed ideas of how they could include workshops in environmental science that were of interest to the teachers and possible topics that the local Finger Lakes Community College faculty would be willing to develop and facilitate. Andrew was hopeful that “maybe an invitation there will bring them in.” He went on to explain that a similar effort was made to involve other postsecondary faculty members, “I have talked to people at SUNY Morrisville and said ‘wouldn’t

you guys like to get involved?’ And they say ‘we would like to, what would you like us to do,’ but it is a matter of getting them there, and they see the kind of people they are working with, they kind of understand.”

The planning committee also identified one other group of teachers, those teaching agricultural education at the regional secondary educational centers, who hadn’t regularly participated in the annual conference, and therefore still needed to be specifically invited to participate in the upcoming event. Andrew emphasized:

We are constantly trying to come up with ideas where, are there new clientele that we are not reaching? We know that the discussion within the NYAAE Board has been that we have to come up with better ways to reach the BOCES teachers who don’t tend to see themselves as ag teachers or they have other priorities. I don’t know if we have come up with an answer to that one. It does, at least the June conference tends to be attended by LEA teachers with an occasional BOCES teacher thrown in but 95% are from local schools. If there is a way to change that, I don’t know.

During the Board meeting in October, the group did consider the participation of BOCES teachers when they were debating on the dates for the conference. One of the reasons the group agreed to move the conference dates to the week of the state final exams was in hope the BOCES teachers would be able to attend. Members of the Board stated that they believed that one reason this group of teachers had not participated in prior years was because this group did not have summer contracts and therefore did not want to give up their summer days for a continuing professional development program. The researcher did note that there were no postsecondary educators or BOCES teachers serving on the Board at the time of this study. Therefore, both groups of educators did not necessarily have the representation on the

Board that may have been needed to address their perspectives, needs and concerns with the current continuing professional education program.

In addition to expanding the groups of individuals who may choose to participate in the professional development program, the planning committee emphasized that they felt a very strong commitment to maintaining and growing the partnerships that already exist within the larger NYAAE Board. Stephanie stressed that “I also think that we need to continue the relationships...it is the funding, it is the expertise and the teachers coming in to pull that all together.” These partnerships included the involvement of the state’s Ag Tech prep project, the Cornell faculty and the state staff in the AEO project. Stephanie described the collaborative partnerships between each of the different representatives in the Board:

I think that you have got to balance that somehow because we [teachers] don’t even know what is out there but that is where, I think, having teachers going to the national meetings, having state staff and some of the leadership coming in. Working with Cornell, Ag Tech Prep, having everybody work together because then you are getting people who are working in the field and having this ‘is it practical?’ and then you have people coming in from Cornell and Tech Prep and state staff looking at it and saying here is something happening at the national level, lets pull it back to New York.

Throughout a number of the interviews, the individual teachers spoke about their perspectives on each of the specific partner organizations and their contributions to the professional development program. Like others on the Board, Mary emphasized:

I think the fact that all of these people come to the table and plan this conference is a very, very good thing. We live in our own little world in [my local community] or at Cornell and to have different people

come together from a college perspective and talk about the newest and latest things on teaching and reading literacy in the classroom is stuff that I wouldn't get sitting back here in [my local community] so that is good stuff that we need.

In contrast to the teachers' perspectives of the partnerships between the organizations, observations of the planning meetings indicated that the other partners really did not engage heavily in the planning work. Representatives from one university and three state staff members were at the October Board meeting and one university faculty did engage briefly in the Board's discussion to move the program to the central part of the state. Otherwise, the planning was done primarily by Lynn and the three teachers: Andrew, Theresa, and Thomas. While the Ag Tech Prep Director did commit financial support to the program, he only interacted with the planning committee by providing a few brief words of advice at the beginning of the October planning committee meeting and by participating in the group discussion during the December meeting in Las Vegas. The Director did meet with Andrew and Lynn in November to review the budget. Other than the Ag Tech Prep Director, no other representatives of the other organizations participated in the planning committee work.

Throughout the planning process for the 2008 conference, the planning committee was very concerned about the possibility of increasing the cost of the conference as a result of the change in location. According to Andrew, the planning committee had a system they used to maintain an affordable registration fee, "we have always tried to start with if we have x number of dollars with registration fee and (the Ag Tech Prep Director) says 'I know that I have budgeted through Tech Prep to provided you with x number of dollars' that gives the committee their total program budget." This year the Board decided to supplement the program by covering the meals for one day, "NYAAE had stepped up and said yes, we would supplement

money if we needed to for some meals or whatever to keep the price down, but we were down to two places to go and basically cost was a factor” (Andrew). Between the two groups, Ag Tech Prep and the NYAAE executive committee, the registration fee was set at \$475 for two days and \$500 for the full three day program.

In addition to providing funding to offset the registration fee, the Ag Tech Prep project also provided funding for the materials provided for the hands-on activities in the workshops. Mary stated very firmly that:

We have to make sure we keep Ag Tech Prep in there somehow because the materials that we bring home are incredible. The hands-on materials are, I think, a huge motivator to go to these things. A lot of times if you go to a conference in June, and we have already planned our next year back in February, we have already spent all of our money, so sometimes June is a little late, and that is where Tech Prep money used to come in.

Mary shared her memory of the Ag Tech Prep project’s original continuing professional education program support:

I think, if I remember right, when Tech Prep started having their own conferences and then Tech Prep and ag teachers combined both conferences into one which made sense instead of being pulled out twice, you put the Ag Tech Prep money into the ag teachers conference and it makes it very, very successful.

Stephanie shared Mary’s appreciation for the Ag Tech Prep funds stating:

I think that everything has gotten better since Tech Prep stepped in. I go back, we used to go to conference and we would get maybe a book. If you won a book in the door prize, you went home, and you were like, woo I am so excited and that was it. Oooh, I got a \$40 book and my

conference was great. But now, looking at Tech Prep, we are able to look at what we want in the workshops, and Tech Prep is able to come back and support that. And then we can take that stuff and come home and use it.

Teachers in the planning committee and the NYAAE Board expressed a strong satisfaction with the way the group has been able to negotiate power between individuals and groups represented in the committee. Andrew observed that “the system seems to work pretty [well]. I think in the last two or three years we have actually spread out over more people as far as the decision making process.” Mary concurred stating, “If there were teachers at the table that really did not agree with what was coming to the table as far as program, the teachers would speak up and say that maybe would not really fit our conference.” Within the Board Andrew believed:

Everybody outside of the teachers, is very supportive and if a teacher or a couple of teachers say ‘hey we ought to be doing....this particular topic’ The general attitude has been that, if you guys think this is a topic that we should be doing then we should be doing it. We have representatives on the NYAAE Board that are very supportive of anything that we want to try to do within a little bit of reason....To that extent I think there is some good communication and great support, I don’t recall at any point when an idea for something we should do for professional development was not greeted with enthusiasm by the whole Board.

As explained earlier, the planning work was limited to the teachers and Lynn, with minimal input from Ag Tech Prep. With this limitation of participation from the other groups, the balance of power perceived by the teachers may really have been the

dominance of the teachers at the expense of the representation of other groups in the planning work.

Within the Board both the president and past president spoke about the unwritten rule of the group that while the planning committee had the opportunity to develop the program plan, the president was expected to have the final say in all decisions regarding the final program location and content. Theresa, past president, reflected on this:

I don't want to say that it is Andrew's decision overall, but as past president I have to step back and say that Andrew is the one who is going to take the role of leadership in this position, so when I say it is his position, it is more he is the one that should be making final decisions. We as a committee, we sit down and we say this and this and this, but as president because he has been elected by the association, they trust him enough to look at it as, he can do their professional development, he can do the planning, he can do a lot of the implementation.

However, Andrew shared that he strongly believed that he did not want to be the one person who made the final decision about the conference plan. Instead he believed:

My role as a member of the committee would just be, to be part of the discussion. As the president, as several have said, the decision is up to you. Ultimately you're the person who makes the decision. I say, 'I'll let you think that'. So, in looking at some possibilities, here are my feelings about it, but I still want the whole Board to make the decision because I don't want it to seem that I said 'This is what I want and this is where we are going.' That doesn't work.

As an example, during the October Board meeting Andrew presented the information regarding the Experiment Station workshop ideas and requested that the group consider the options for other locations and vote. Andrew also yielded the decision of the conference registration fees to the Board when he requested to have the second conference call on November 12th since it was only he and Lynn on the November 8th call that was set up to have the group decide the final conference registration fee rates.

The planning committee's desire to provide learning experiences around the studies conducted at the Experiment Station resulted in the development of a new collaborative relationship between the NYAAE Board members and the leadership at the Experiment Station. The teachers emphasized in their interviews that this relationship will be an important means of helping local secondary agriculture teachers experience and learn from the current research studies that may have a significant impact on the state's agriculture industry. The teachers recognized that without the opportunity to interact with the university researchers, secondary teachers may not have access to current technology and information that would be of benefit to their agriculture students. While this relationship with the faculty at the Experiment Station was a new aspect of the continuing professional education program, the teachers believed that it will be mutually beneficial to both groups based on the relationships the secondary teachers had already established with faculty members at the state colleges of agriculture and technology.

In contrast to the well developed plans to involve the faculty from the Agriculture Experiment Station, the teachers did not appear to have a clear plan of how they would be able to include more secondary teachers from the BOCES centers. This concern was emphasized by Andrew, the Board president, but he did not provide any specific plans of what the Board or planning committee would be doing

differently at the upcoming conference to draw in these teachers. This would be one particular group of professionals that the planning committee may still need to focus on in order to develop a successful means to engage these teachers in the conference program.

The well established partnerships between the teachers' association, the AEO project and the Agriculture Tech Prep project was made very clear during the Board and planning committee meetings in which each group engaged in very collaborative discussions to address the financial concerns caused by the relocation of the conference at a hotel facility. The teachers in the Board emphasized the importance of this collaboration to not only control the costs of the registration fees but to provide the workshop materials for teachers to take back to their local schools. As the teachers shared, the workshop materials were a foundational piece of the professional development program.

Responsibility for Communicating With and Representing Other Teachers

Theme: The agriculture teacher planners were challenged by their responsibility to communicate with the teachers they represented.

While the teachers appeared to be very comfortable communicating within the planning committee and NYAAE Board, during their interviews they expressed some apprehension and worry about their ability to communicate with their professional community. The teachers in this planning committee indicated that they engaged in both informal and formal communication practices in an effort to seek out workshop topic ideas from their fellow teachers and to ensure teachers knew about the conference plans early in the school year. The informal communication occurred at conferences and other agricultural education events while the formal communications were web based surveys, email notices on the state-wide electronic teacher list-serve, and written evaluations at the conclusion of each conference. The following section

will provide an insight into the teachers' specific reflections or views of each of these communication practices.

The informal communication activities were described by several of the teachers. In particular Theresa, past president of the Board, shared a number of examples of conversations she has had with individual teachers who were interested in providing her with ideas that might improve the conference. For example Theresa reflected that a teacher:

Talked to me about doing maple workshops... [for] the different teachers that may not have the ability to have the kind of program he has, but if they have the ability to do the maple processing or maple candy or something like that, that they could buy the maple syrup from somewhere and do just a little bit of it in their program because it is an important aspect to New York.

Theresa explained that this person was not the only teacher who volunteered to provide a workshop at a conference and during the interviews the Board members provided additional examples that included an offer to teach a session about apple tree production on a school land lab and another teacher who volunteered to teach various mechanical science topics. Prior to joining the Board, Mary contacted Lynn with a suggestion for a workshop presenter:

Last year I saw a program that was done locally, and I thought that it would be fantastic to bring back to the agriculture teachers so I recommended it. I gave the information to Lynn and she did a lot of leg work to get the background information and brought it back to the group. I think that's what, when people see stuff across the state that they think would be valuable, I think we are getting more and more

feedback from people saying this would be really good to have at our agriculture teachers conference.

Theresa further explained that “teachers would send me notes, they would just jot down stuff or they would pull me aside at conferences, or pull me aside at FFA stuff and share ideas.” Or, Theresa would initiate the casual discussion when she would:

Just sit down and start talking to them saying this is what we did last year, tell me what you thought about it. That was my big thing. I really strongly believe that if we talk to teachers they are going to tell us what they want and then as an organization we have to make sure we are meeting their needs....If people think you are working with them, not necessarily for them, but with them, then they will respect you.

When asked what she understood as the difference between working with and working for someone Theresa stated, “When you work for somebody they tell you what do to. When you work with them they are more willing to be there as a cooperative effort, I guess.” She further explained her perspective of her leadership responsibilities, “they’re telling us what they need, if we are not listening to it then we are not serving the teachers we are voted to serve.”

Andrew has suggested that the planning committee’s effort to collect formal feedback and their efforts to use this feedback to design the conferences has encouraged other teachers to continue to provide ideas because they see that the conference reflects their previous suggestions. Specifically Andrew observed:

We did some evaluations that at one year’s conference would carry over to the next conference. There would be comments made about ‘wish you would offer a workshop in’ fill in the blank. I think two years, two summers ago we did a big survey and everybody got online

and we had surprisingly good responses. Most of the teachers now feel that, based on one conference after that, we looked at some of the things they said, and the fact that we put out publicly that there was obviously a great deal more responses than we could ever pack into one conference, that we were listening to what they had to say....I think that there was some thought given by some teachers as to what was not just needed by themselves but for all of us in general. So I thought that particular survey probably did a good job of letting every teacher put their own little voice to professional development.

The free flow of suggestions from teachers has surprised Thomas. He reflected on the responses he received from teachers after sending out an email to those in his region requesting input and ideas for the conference planning committee,

I thought I was going to zip out something and no one is going to respond and the next thing I knew I got ten emails back. 'Well, this is something I wanted to see this year and this is something I want to see.' Yet, on a survey it did not come to them, but after the survey it came to them.

Throughout the interviews and during the observed meetings the teachers in the planning committee frequently referred to the conference surveys as a primary means for determining the priorities for the conference workshop sessions. While the Board had a limited number of records of their previous planning work, they did have evaluation feedback for each of the last five conferences. The value of the teacher feedback was expressed by Andrew, "as far as the information we are getting back, that is great for getting back the ideas about what teachers need because teachers are saying we need training in particular areas." Thomas specifically referred to the survey results stating:

I think we need to look back at our survey from last year a little bit and say, ok, what are some of the things that they would like and are there some common themes that, like we did last year, we looked at surveys, we built some common themes, we ran with it. For the most part I think it worked out alright.

While the teachers certainly relied on the results of the surveys, they also recognized that the results had to be viewed with some caution, “truthfully surveys don’t get responded to very well. I mean you either get the people that are very passionate about something or people that have a gripe, but at least you are seeing two facets of the organization there” (Theresa). Even so, Stephanie emphasized:

I can’t picture not doing it this way. You have got to start small I guess, get those surveys out at the workshops...what do the teachers want? If they get to the workshops, I would imagine every state has got to do some sort of conference evaluations, look at those conference evaluations and then start asking what do you want to see? What is different? And then somebody besides the staff people has to look at them.

Even with the limitations and possible short-comings in the complete representation of the teachers reflected in the survey results, the teachers in the planning committee believed that providing teachers with an opportunity to give input through surveys was a foundational component of their work. During the round two interviews with the three teachers with the most planning experience, each emphasized that any other state interested in increasing teacher participation in planning needed to consider utilizing a survey tool to solicit initial teacher feedback.

When the Board faced the critical teacher concerns after the 2005 conference, they regrouped and decided to provide an expanded web-based survey to all teachers.

The previous surveys were only administered to conference participants. Andrew was the lead teacher in the development of the web-based survey and shared the story of the development and results of that project during his first interview. According to Andrew:

I think that was at some point right after the fall of that, must have been 2005. We decided we needed to have something to work from. That was the point at which we had really started to do a lot more collaboration [sic] that was developed. I think that Lynn said hey you guys, ‘what direction are we headed with these conferences?’ and I am not sure that those of us around the Board at that point were totally sure, so we kind of, I think, doing our own searching and said ‘you know, we need to be more organized about this a little bit’....It seemed like a very easy way to gather a little bit of information except we ended up gathering a lot more information I think than we planned for when we started. I think we got a better response maybe because it was the NYAAE Board that put it out there ‘this is what we would like from you. We’re charged with helping to plan your conferences each year so we want you to provide us with some information.’ Sometimes I think that is a better way than lets say a message from the State Education Department saying we want you to....too often too many of us file away stuff from the State Education Department with yeah, yeah, yeah, when I get to it. But when other teachers are saying to you, ‘we want you to provide us with’... that is why we got a much better response.

As Andrew reflected on the project, he was pleased that “people just surprisingly were very good about providing lots of input....So I think that is going to guide us for a few years.” A portion of the feedback from the web based survey is

provided in Appendix P. In addition to the tremendous volume of ideas that the teachers submitted, Andrew believed “that is the thing I think for us that was the tipping point as to when things really took off as far as teachers being involved” in the planning of the teachers’ continuing professional education conference. The results provided material for the planning committee to incorporate into the program and the volume of information necessitated that more people besides the state staff commit to helping sift through the feedback.

Last summer, in addition to the group’s traditional methods of seeking input from teachers, the NYAAE Board decided that it would be helpful to organize informal discussions with teachers who attended each of the five weeks of summer student leadership training camp. Mary shared the story of the creation of what would be called the *fireside chats*:

Lynn and I were talking on the side of Long Pond with our feet in the water and I was just kind of discussing with her that I think that right now we are in the middle of change, we are in the middle of a huge change in leadership, change in staff. I thought that now is the time that we need to have a think-tank. We need to bring people up to camp and we need to talk and hash some of these issues out and talk about these issues. So based on that discussion, Lynn suggested that ‘all summer you are going to have ag teachers here, why don’t you have, why don’t you meet with your teachers once every week and have them come up with a list of issues’, and the first week we did that, and we spent a couple of hours doing this and it was incredible, it was good, no one was mad at each other, but it was incredible how our issues were the same. As much as I remember [a teacher] saying that you can’t put ten ag teachers in a room and have them agree on the same thing, that is

true, but we all address the same issues....We were just trying to come up with a list of issues that we needed to address, not that we were going to fix, and I did not want to dwell on the past, this is the issue and what do we need to do in the future to try to fix it. So we started out week one and Lynn and Andrew did it week two, and every week they compiled a list of their issues and a lot of the comments. This is interesting, a lot of the comments that people wrote down each week were like, were they even going to read these? Some random thoughts like, [a teacher] likes camp, I think were written in there to see if we were actually going to go back and look through all of these.

The teachers on the NYAAE Board expressed their excitement about the teacher participation in the *fireside chats* during their October meeting. As Mary reflected on the work the Board was doing to understand the teacher feedback in the *fireside chats*, she explained that as they “sort through the pages of surveys and the pages and pages of notes that we took from our fireside chats,” they needed to use their experiences as teachers to understand how to take the feedback and utilize it in their planning work. However, the planning committee appeared to recognize that they needed to keep doing their part to use the teacher feedback to guide their work, and they had to make an effort to share updates on the progress they make on each of the issues with the larger teacher community to ensure that teachers would continue to participate in discussions regarding professional issues. Andrew observed that:

This year we got a lot a feedback through the *fireside chats* which were great. I mean we went into that with the thought that we get teachers together for a few minutes, write some things down, find out what their gripes are, and they turned into three hours sitting around a campfire. I think Mary decided that there had been 230 hours that had been put in

at the time of the October meeting, between all of the teachers that put out their ideas and then the tabulation. That is a large commitment on behalf of, I am going to say, 40 or 50 teachers to really do some things that will hopefully, now that was not all professional development but there was a good portion of time that was spent talking about professional development opportunities. We have gotten a lot from there.

Once the information was collected from the teachers through the various surveys or informal discussion and shared with the planning committee, the committee members believed that the decisions made within the group regarding the conference program were fair. As Christine stated, “I think that majority rules based on the evaluations” and Jean reinforced:

We pretty much hash everything out, to do the best for everyone. I think everybody is pretty happy with the decisions that are made. Of course you are always going to have some people, who are never going to be happy with whatever decision you make, but we try to do our best, and I think our opinions are always taken well within the group.

Once the decisions were made within the planning committee and the Board, there appeared to be an emphasis on improving the communication of the group’s decisions back to the teaching community. At the conclusion of the October Board meeting the group voted to begin a policy to have the meeting minutes posted on the NYAAE website within two weeks of the meetings to allow teachers access to the group’s decisions. In addition to this policy change, the Board also asked Andrew to send a communication out on the state list-serve to provide teachers with a list of highlights from the meeting. Andrew did send an email out on the agricultural education list-serve the following week. After the Board’s conference call regarding

the final decisions on the conference location and change in time, Mary expressed her concern about sharing the Board's decisions, "my point was to let people know why we are leaving it on this date. It is not just something we pulled out of the sky. There is actually a reason why it is during this time....think we have to do a good job (of) advertising or promoting this to our teachers so that they don't just think that we planned it during the Regents for no reason."

This strong effort to improve communication may be linked to a concern that Thomas explained as "communication is one of our state's downfalls, but I think communication is something that we are just beginning. I see it going in the right way, it is going to just take some time and some energy, but it is worth it." Theresa agreed as she shared, "We really wanted people to work together and to be forced to work together" so the planning committee chose to have teachers divided into teams in the new conference format. To really encourage the teachers to communicate, the planning committee added a specific session to the new conference format in 2006 entitled *Surviving and Thriving in Agricultural Education*. Thomas talked about how he understood the value of the particular experience:

A few years ago we had a workshop that was on agriculture issues, issues in the classroom, and issues in the school. It was facilitated very well and it had a lot of good communication back and forth. We were with our teams, and we had to talk with our teams about some issues. I think that really started the discussion amongst the teachers....I think that personally looking at how these teachers can communicate during the summer conference gives them a boost. It gives them a charge....We are still working on building those (relationships) together to keep that communication because each year the teams rotate

and the same members are not on the teams every year. We are trying to build that communication with all of us.

Communicating with the other agriculture teachers was a core concern and priority for the teachers in the planning committee. This concern may have existed in part because of the teachers' perception that members of their profession have a difficult time communicating and building relationships with each other. As a result of these communication concerns, the teachers in the NYAAE Board described how they had made specific efforts to seek input and share their plans with their peers. While they have described how communication had improved between the Board and teachers, it still appeared to be an area the group was working to improve

Teacher Ownership of Their Continuing Professional Education Experiences

Over-arching Theme: As a result of their participation in the continuing professional education program planning group the eight agricultural education teachers in this case study had established a sense of ownership of their continuing professional education experiences that included the responsibility for the development of the professional practices of themselves and their peers.

In his final interview Andrew shared in his reflections that this sense of teacher ownership went beyond the group of teachers involved directly in the planning work:

There is more feeling of ownership amongst the teachers, and therefore more want to go to the conference, and then they are more apt to come back from the conference and use either the materials that they got or the ideas that they heard about. I could say that there were years where we had a conference where not much of anybody used anything that went on at that conference because they really didn't feel a whole lot of ownership.

While the teachers were very satisfied with the way that they and the other members of the planning committee and NYAAE Board worked collectively to accomplish the planning work, the experienced teachers explained that this was a relatively new format for the planning work, and it had only evolved over the last two to three years. The study participants strongly agreed that “the teachers have been really involved in the whole planning process.” The teachers explained that this total involvement included helping collect teacher feedback regarding their needs, select the program location and facilities, identifying workshop topics and presenters, seeking out resources to distribute as part of the workshop sessions, and negotiating with other organizations to secure the funding needed to carry out the annual program. The teachers believed that it was critical that they be involved in the planning work, since they had the classroom experience necessary to help identify how the program could be designed to meet teacher needs. Specifically, their experience was helpful in identifying specific workshop topics, appropriate presenters, and relevant materials for teachers to take back to their classrooms.

A majority of the teachers volunteered to be a part of the NYAAE Board and planning committee because they were encouraged by peers to assume one of the leadership roles in the association. This encouragement and support from their peers increased the teachers’ sense of responsibility for the profession, and therefore the content of the continuing professional education programs. These interests, as well as the teachers’ interests in improving communication and collegial interactions within the professional community, appear to have had an influence on work the teachers did to change the original content emphasis and format of the conference program. Teachers explained that they intend to continue to participate because they believe that there are a number of new topics and ideas that could be used to develop future

programs, and they are excited about the opportunity to lead and work as a part of future conference planning efforts.

The agricultural education teachers illustrated that they influenced the planning group decisions regarding the continuing professional education program planning activities and design through the stories they experienced. They told of their involvement in the impromptu brainstorming session that took place three years before this study in the basement of Lynn's house. The teachers described this as a pivotal point of change in the annual summer continuing professional education program planning practices. This group session resulted in changes in program emphasis, a redesign of how teachers interacted with each other during the conference, and resulted in the development of a web-based survey that generated a significant amount of feedback from the teaching community. As a result of the large response to the web-based survey the teachers became more involved in the analysis of the teachers' workshop ideas and selection of presenters. Through the process of recreating the program design and integrating the web survey results into the workshop selection process, the teachers accepted responsibility for planning decisions and the ownership of the program. In addition to the expected changes in curriculum content, the teachers involved with the planning work hope that the changes they have made in the conference format encouraged teachers to communicate with their peers and develop collaborative relationships to help them address future concerns in their practice or support them at times when they need encouragement.

Summary

This chapter provided the results of the analysis of multiple interviews with the teachers, NYAAE Board and professional development committee planning meetings, conference calls, documents, and emails. From this work six themes and one overarching theme emerged as a means to address the four research questions that guided

this study. First, to respond to the question, “How did the agriculture teachers describe their participation in the planning of the continuing professional education program?” the study participants strongly agreed that “the teachers have been really involved in the whole planning process.” The teachers explained that this total involvement included helping collect teacher feedback regarding their needs, select the program location and facilities, identifying workshop topics and presenters, seeking out resources to distribute as part of the workshop sessions, and negotiating with other organizations to secure the funding needed to carry out the annual program. The teachers believed that it was critical that they be involved in the planning work, since they had the classroom experience necessary to help identify how the program could be designed to meet teacher needs. Specifically, their experience was helpful in identifying specific workshop topics, appropriate presenters, and relevant materials for teachers to take back to their classrooms. Within the group the teachers described that they were satisfied with the communication between members of the NYAAE Board and planning committee, however they were challenged by their own ability and the expectations of other teachers to communicate the planning work with their peers. While the teachers were very satisfied with the way that they and the other members of the planning committee and NYAAE Board worked collectively to accomplish the planning work, the experienced teachers explained that this was a relatively new format for the planning work, and it had only evolved over the last two to three years.

In response to the second research question, “Why do teachers participate in the continued professional education program planning process?” the teachers’ reflections included a range of responses from those that had a desire to be in-the-know, to others who were interested in providing leadership to influence the educational direction of their profession. A majority of the teachers volunteered to be a part of the NYAAE Board and planning committee because they were encouraged

by peers to assume one of the leadership roles in the association. However, several explained that they had become involved because of strong desires to meet new people and have an influence on changes they wanted to see in the annual continuing professional education program. These interests as well as interests in improving communication and collegial interactions within the professional community appear to have had an influence on work the teachers did to change the original content emphasis and format of the conference program. Teachers explained that they intend to continue to participate because they believe that there are a number of new topics and ideas that could be used to develop future programs, and they are excited about the opportunity to lead and work as a part of future conference planning efforts.

Research question three was, “How do the agricultural education teachers perceive that they influenced the planning group decisions regarding the continuing professional education program planning activities and design?” This was most strongly illustrated by the stories the experienced teachers told of how they were involved in the impromptu brainstorming session that took place three years before this study in the basement of Lynn’s house. The teachers described this as a pivotal point of change in the annual summer continuing professional education program planning practices. This group session resulted in changes in program emphasis, a redesign of how teachers interacted with each other during the conference, and resulted in the development of a web-based survey that generated a significant amount of feedback from the teaching community. The results of the web-based survey lead to a need for the teachers to become more involved in the analysis of the teachers’ workshop ideas and selection of presenters.

Finally, the findings in this chapter provide a limited response to the fourth research question, “How do the teachers in the planning group perceive their participation in the continuing professional education program planning influences

their professional practice and their profession?” Annually, the teachers take a lead role in selecting the workshop topics, presenters, and resources that teachers anticipate taking back to their local classrooms and implementing as a means of changing and updating their curriculum content. In addition to the expected changes in curriculum content, the teachers involved with the planning work hope that the changes they have made in the conference format encourages teachers to communicate with their peers and develop collaborative relationships that may help them address future concerns in their practice or support them at times when they need encouragement.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While the adult and continuing professional education literatures emphasizes the importance of learner participation in program planning activities, few empirical studies have documented the influence or benefits of learner participation on the planning work or the educational outcomes. Of direct interest in this study, research reported over the past two decades indicates that the current practice of agricultural education involves survey-based needs assessments as a tool for university and state department of education personnel to use in planning continuing professional education programs on behalf of teachers. Only two agricultural education studies were found in that time frame that went beyond needs assessments and those involved simply identifying those individuals or organizations responsible for planning (Anderson et al., 1992; Pals & Crawford, 1980) and examining how those stakeholders participated at the planning table. Contemporary adult and continuing professional education program planning theory (Cervero & Wilson, 2006) suggests that researchers should attempt to understand who is determining the continuing professional education agenda and what program objectives they are attempting to accomplish.

Rather than viewing the process of planning educational programs as a linear progression of identifying needs, developing educational objectives, designing the educational program, and evaluating the program results (Tyler, 1949), contemporary adult and continuing education program planning theory positions planning as “a social activity whereby people construct educational programs by negotiating personal, organizational, and social interests in contexts marked by socially structured relations of power” (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 24). Cervero and Wilson have proposed “that by seeing what’s really going on at the table, planners are more likely

to offer programs that can increase people's life chances, improve the functioning of the organizations where people work, and strengthen the communities in which they live" (2006, p. ix).

Summary

This qualitative case study examined learner participation in the planning of continuing professional education. The site and audience for investigating learner involvement was the planning of an annual continuing professional education program for New York State teachers of agricultural education. The learners in this case study were teachers elected by their peers in the New York Association of Agriculture Educators (NYAAE) to serve as association officers and members of the NYAAE Board. This Board includes seven other representatives of the broader agricultural education profession and provides state-wide leadership for the profession. At the time of this study, the teachers on the Board included six women and two men; all of the teachers were white. Seven of the eight teachers in the group attended one or more of the Board or planning committee meetings and each participated in the interviews for this study.

The purpose of this study was to examine learner participation in the planning of continuing professional education. The site and audience for investigating learner involvement was the planning of an annual continuing professional education program for New York State teachers of agricultural education. Four research questions guided the study: 1) How did the agriculture teachers describe their participation in the planning of the continuing professional education program? 2) Why do teachers participate in the continuing professional education program planning process? 3) How do the agricultural education teachers perceive that they influence the planning group decision regarding the continuing professional education program planning activities? 4) How do the teachers in the planning group perceive their participation

in the continuing professional education program planning influences their professional practice and their profession?

In an effort to address these questions this qualitative case study utilized in-depth individual interviews, observations of each of the Board and planning committee meetings, an examination of the documents associated with the planning work, and a final focus group session. An analysis of the data resulted in the emergence of six themes that provided an understanding of the teachers' participation in the planning work within the context of the NYAAE Board and planning committee activities:

1. The process of planning for the annual continuing professional education conference has evolved over the years from top-down to teacher-driven.
2. Over time teacher participation in the planning work resulted in fundamental changes in the continued professional education conference format and focus.
3. As a part of their planning work, the teachers saw themselves as having a responsibility for the future direction of the profession.
4. The teachers developed informal planning practices to select potential topics for continuing professional education conference workshops.
5. The recent success of the continuing professional education conferences was attributed to the cooperation and collaboration among the organizations.
6. The agriculture teacher planners were challenged by their responsibility to communicate with the teachers they represented. In the discussion that follows the content within these themes will be use to address each of the research questions.

Finally, an the over-arching theme emerged from the case study findings that provides a general thesis for the entire study and that offers a fundamental departure

point for applying the results of the study in changing how we go about planning for continuing professional education in the profession. Over-arching theme:

As a result of their participation in the continuing professional education program planning group the eight agricultural education teachers in this case study had established a sense of ownership of their continuing professional education experiences that included the responsibility for the development of the professional practices of themselves and their peers.

Discussion

The more experienced teachers on the Board believed that their influence on the planning work for the conferences held during the 1980s was limited to simply identifying their continuing professional education interests or needs on conference surveys. It is clear that they did not have access to any of the planning work that went into developing the program during the period of time that it was managed by the State Education Department. In the early 1990s the responsibility for the planning work for the New York State agricultural education annual conference shifted away from the New York State Education Department (SED) personnel. Lacking direction from SED, the teachers who served on the NYAAE Board assumed de-facto responsibility for that process. This change in the involvement of the teachers in the planning work did not appear to occur because agricultural education leaders in the State Education Department made an effort to invite the teachers to the planning table. The teachers became involved because there was no one else interested or able to assume the leadership responsibilities to initiate the planning work. The teachers in this study described how aspects of the planning table (Cervero & Wilson, 2006) had transformed as different stakeholder groups had access to participate in the planning and the power those groups enacted as a part of the planning work.

When the Agricultural Education Outreach (AEO) program was established in the mid 1990s the teachers on the Board appear to have largely turned over the planning responsibilities to the new AEO staff. Since the teachers in this study were not a part of the NYAAE Board at the time that the (AEO) project started, it is unclear to them why their predecessors backed away from part of their opportunity to participate in the planning. The level of teacher participation in the planning process might have been caused by the assumed power entrusted to the new staff based on the wording of the (AEO) project objectives which included planning continuing professional education programs for both secondary and postsecondary educators. Cervero and Wilson (2006) provide a perspective that may help explain the teachers' change in roles and power. They suggested that "what people do in practical situations at these planning tables depends, in part, on how they see what is going on" (p. 18). If the teachers had seen the context of the planning work return to the traditional power structure after the establishment of the AEO program, they might have been satisfied with the change in their roles from central to peripheral, because it would have represented a return to the previous and familiar structure of their profession.

What appears to be unique about the Board that served as the agricultural education planning group in this study was the apparent shift of the planning work to a context in which the teachers not only had access to the work at the planning table but were working in collaborative partnerships (Queeney, 1997) with other organizations to accomplish the work. In these collaborative partnership they had a "substantive role in making decisions about educational programs at the planning table" (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 3) where they essentially controlled the planning work yet partnered with the AEO staff and Ag Tech Prep Director to carry out the details of the work.

However, teachers explained that while there is a collective effort to negotiate and develop the program in relationships of balanced power there was also a need for the teachers to negotiate in an imbalance of power in the relationship with the Director of the Agriculture Tech Prep project since this person managed the funding the Board used to finance portions of the conference program. In this relationship the teachers described that they needed have an awareness of what Cervero and Wilson (2006) called the political objectives and outcomes for themselves as representative of the teachers in the group as well as those of the Director.

As the format of the Board member participation has changed the representatives of the different groups appear to have managed to work cooperatively to respect each of the “organizational agendas” (Cervero, 2000, p. 11) in their efforts to develop their current partnership. As Cervero and Wilson explained, the “stakeholders in a social and organizational context vie for control to enact a particular educational vision” (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 14) and in this case the teachers have come to recognize this context and operate comfortably to enact their visions for the conference programs by working with the AEO and Ag Tech Prep projects, teacher education programs at Cornell University and SUNY Oswego, the State Education Department, and faculty from the agriculture and technical colleges.

To enact their vision, the teachers on the Board and planning committee expect the person serving as the NYAAE president to provide a significant amount of leadership for final decisions regarding the continuing professional education program plan. At times this is a point of struggle for the group as different presidents have chosen to handle this expectation in their own leadership styles. As the group continues to evolve and develop its role as the leadership group responsible for the continuing professional education program planning members of the group will need to negotiate their expectations with the presiding president.

While the teachers on the Board embraced their power and influence on the decisions of the program planning work, they also clearly valued the diversity of the perspectives provided by the other planners on the Board and in the planning committee. When Stephanie was asked to think about the participation of teachers in the planning work she reflected that, “I can’t picture not doing it this way....now we can see the lists [of workshop needs requested] and say this is where we need to focus.” This statement clearly illustrates the group’s recognition of how they are able to exert more power within the group and influence the planning decisions. Andrew’s comment that “the teachers involved in the process have more ownership in it” is critical because it reflects the relationship the teachers see they have on the development of the conference objectives and program activities. While these relationships appear to be working in a manner that supports and encourages teacher participation in the planning work, the history of the group itself illustrates how the teachers’ participation can change over time as different stakeholders come to collaborate with the teachers. In this case the emergence of the AEO project, as a partner in the planning work, reduced the teacher participation for a period of time. The Cervero and Wilson (2006) planning theory accounts for the ever changing relationships among people and groups at the planning table and therefore emphasizes the need for planners to recognize who is at the planning table, what agendas they bring with them to the planning work, and how they exert their relationships of power to enact their agendas in the continuing professional education program plan. In this particular case the new teachers on the board spoke about their initial confusion about their roles in the Board and planning committee decisions but over time they learned from their participation how to engage in the decision-making process.

Learners Participated in Planning

The dominate reason teachers in this study chose to become involved in the work of the NYAAE Board and planning committee was because of the encouragement they received from peers who were already serving on the Board or other close friends in the profession. Once on the board these relationships appeared to have contributed to the group dynamic that encouraged the collaborative attitude among the group members. The relationships also supported the individual teachers' "capacity to act" (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 85) to exert their power within the planning work of the Board because of the "socially organized relations" (p. 86) that were established before they came to the Board. Contributing to the teachers' capacity to act was the classroom experiences and experiences in other continuing professional education programs which they explained that they brought to their planning work.

Within this Board and planning committee the "capacity to act" appeared to be shared "relatively equally" (p. 86) among the teachers and other members of the group. In addition to influencing how individuals in the group interacted, "these power relations matter because they shape who has the capacity to be represented at the planning tables where decisions are made about educational programs" (p. 86). Therefore, while the process of adding new people to the group through previously established relationships may support the teachers "capacity to act" within the group, it may have also attributed to the lack of representation of teachers from the BOCES schools within the planning group.

The absence of the BOCES teacher representation may be related to the lack of BOCES teacher participation in the conferences. It appeared to be difficult for the current Board and planning committee to represent the needs of the BOCES teachers, not only for program content but other management decisions, such as time and place, that the group makes as a part of the planning work since the current group of teachers

may not represent the specific interests of the BOCES teachers within the profession. Therefore, while secondary teachers are represented in the New York State continuing professional education program planning for agricultural education, there may still be specific groups of agriculture teachers that remain unrepresented on the Board and therefore in the planning work.

Learners Influenced the Planning Work

As the experienced teachers described their perceptions of the planning practices of the 1980s they explained that they believed the secondary agricultural education teachers had very little influence on the conference planning activities or the program content. Instead, they understood that the State Education Department held control of the decisions regarding the continuing professional education program design and content. In contrast to this earlier planning work, the teachers who participate in the current planning structure perceive that they have a substantial influence (Cervero & Wilson, 2006) on the program planning work and the current program design.

As the teachers told their stories about the impromptu basement meeting held at Lynn's house in the summer of 2005, they explained how the group created a new format and program emphasis as a result of the collective brainstorming of Lynn and the six teachers. The teachers described that they exhibited substantial influence (Cervero & Wilson, 2006) on the program as they proposed and adopted new ideas to create the team focused format for teacher participation which they hoped would encourage greater communication between teachers in the teams and other individuals in agricultural education profession. At the same time the new plan called for a reduction in the proportion of workshops provided by university faculty. This change in the educational objectives to focus on teacher designed educational experiences demonstrated a shift in the epistemological understanding that informed the planning

practice. Finally, the current planning practices exhibited by the teachers and state staff included a conscious awareness of the importance of the political and social as well as the educational objectives of the program, as Cervero and Wilson (2006) described, the teachers attempted to plan with both eyes open.

These changes in the program resulted from the groups' intentional efforts to move away from deliberately planning only for the educational objectives, to deliberately planning for the social and political objectives of the program as well. The social objectives became evident as the teachers at the basement meeting agreed that they needed to change the program format to require teacher participants to work in teams during portions of the activities. In this case the teachers appeared deliberately to take advantage of a social phenomenon in which "education does not stand outside the unequal relations of power that more generally structure social life; rather, educational programs not only are structured by these relations, but also play a role in reproducing or changing them" (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 19). The program was therefore deliberately designed to use and foster the social structure among members of the profession. Creation and strengthening of inter-teacher relationships were designed into the program to try to address issues of weak relationships among members of the agricultural education community in New York State.

After the basement meeting the new program format resulted in a shift away from the university driven, model of knowledge production in exchange for a continuing professional education program designed to emphasis and value teacher developed knowledge shared by teachers as workshop facilitators as well as teacher to teacher exchanges of best teaching practices within the activities in the conference program. This format promoted an exchange of practitioner constructed knowledge as a means of addressing problems in practice that drew upon the teachers' practitioner repertoires (Cervero, 1988; Schön, 1983) therefore embracing an epistemology of

practice (Schön, 1983) whereby the knowledge developed by teachers as a part of their everyday “reflection-in-action” (p. 49) is exchanged between practitioners during the workshop experiences.

Learner Participation in the Program Planning Influenced Professional Practice

During the initial transition of the planning leadership in the 1990s, the teachers continued the technical update model that was traditionally had been provided by personnel of the State Education Department. The teachers in the study were very critical of the program content in the earlier conferences “where most of what we did was some paper handouts and that was all you came home with” (Andrew). The lack of take home materials was attributed to the lack of people or money to put the program together. It appeared that at the time the teachers did not think that they had other program model options. As Nowlen (1988) proposed, the continued use of the update model is likely to be the result of the continued dominance of the positive epistemology within pre-professional education programs and the assumed context of professional practice. During the interviews the experienced teachers indicated that they did not think their participation in the earlier conferences had a significant influence on their classroom teaching; in fact, Andrew, Stephanie, Mary, and Theresa all specifically expressed their concerns with the lack of resources or ideas that they were able to take home to implement in their local programs. While these comments do not attempt to represent the perceptions of all of the other teachers in the profession, it does call into question the influence or lack of influence the program had on the agricultural education teaching profession in New York. These issues reflect Houle’s (1980) concerns with the contrast between the complexity of professional practice and simplicity of an update model of continuing professional education programs.

While the current planning practices for continuing professional education programs within the New York agricultural education community reflected the collaborative partnerships proposed by both Nowlen (1988) and Cervero (1988) these practices have not included any efforts to consider other educational program models that would encourage long-term learning experiences that encourage individual teachers to “direct their own learning” (Nowlen, 1988, p. 213). Instead, the NYAAE Board continued to struggle to try to address the educational needs of all of the agriculture teachers with one four-day program. This continuation of the same program model has persisted even with the concerns expressed by teachers in the *fireside chats* that the ‘shotgun approach’ did not necessarily fit their needs. Mary specifically indicated that “I think we have to make sure we address that, which is hard.”

Finally, the teachers hoped the continuing professional education program would have two major influences on the profession were to help with the retention of new agricultural education teachers and to improve the communication and therefore the relationships among members of the agriculture teaching profession. The teachers hoped that if new teachers and pre-service teachers experienced the team activities in the new conference format and had the chance to work with these groups of experienced teachers during the conference they would be more likely to call upon the experienced teachers when they needed assistance in their own practice. The development of these long-term relationships with other teachers shifts the continuing professional education program away from a technical update model to include aspects of Nowlen’s performance model (1988) that accounts for the teachers “cultural influences” (p. 73) in their local agricultural education program, school district, and community as well as the teacher’s “individual characteristics” (p. 73). While this does not appear to be well developed as a formal piece of the continuing professional

education program, it may be a piece that develops as the group continues to work with their newly expanded role at the center of the program planning process.

Implications for Practice and Further Research

This case study of the planning work conducted by the NYAAE Board and planning committee provided an opportunity to examine how learners have been able to participate in the planning process for their annual continuing professional education program. The researcher was able to examine the dynamics of the interactions among the learners, the state staff, and other stakeholders who participated in the various phases of the planning activities. Based on this work there are a number of implications for the practice of continuing professional education program planning that may be useful to other planning groups.

The teachers on this Board were elected to represent the diverse groups of secondary agricultural education teachers in New York State. This effort to represent other learners was a particular challenge to this group and suggests that program planners examine how they enable the access of *diverse groups of learners* within one professional content area to the planning tables (Cervero & Wilson, 2006) in ways that allow the learners to make substantial contributions to the planning work and the ability to influence the continuing professional education programs in ways that meet their educational, social, political, and professional needs. According to adult education program planning theory (Cervero & Wilson, 2006) this is a continually evolving and changing aspect of the planning practice since the individuals at the planning tables can change frequently and with each change comes potential changes in the agendas of those individuals.

The learners in this case clearly found that a conscious effort was required on their parts to communicate with others involved in the planning process and more importantly with the others that they represented. It was especially important to the

learners in this study to ensure that they were making a connection between their planning work and the others they represented in their profession. As a part of their effort to communicate, the learners in this case study articulated a strong understanding of the need to plan with “both eyes open in working the planning table, thus seeing both the educational as well as the social and political outcomes resulting from the program” (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 19).

While the learners in this study demonstrated a sense of ownership of their continued professional education program, further research is necessary to examine the evidence of ownership within groups that have varying degrees of participation in the planning work. The results of this case also suggests that additional studies may be necessary to examine what specific planning practices or dynamics within the planning group provided the support or access necessary for the development of ‘ownership’. Since this case only examined the perspectives of the learners, further work is necessary to examine the perspectives and specific practices of the planners who engage in group planning that generates the learners’ ownership of the professional learning experience. Finally, while the results of this case suggested that the learners’ ownership of the continuing professional education program may have an influence on their professional practice; it did not include a specific examination of the learners’ professional practices. Therefore, additional studies of the professional practices of learners who articulate a sense of ownership of their continuing professional education experiences may provide an understanding of the influence of learners’ ownership of educational experiences on their practice and their profession.

Based on the findings from this study, it is recommended that additional research be conducted within agricultural education to examine the planning practices of other planning groups through the lens of adult education program planning theory. There appears to be some concern within this group of learners that the technical

update model may not really be addressing the needs of the agricultural education teachers. In practice agricultural education continuing professional education program planners may need to examine the other program models that appear both in the research literature and professional journals. Upon closer examination of the models through the lens of the teachers' educational requests and concerns expressed on surveys, the planners may find that other models may be helpful in supporting or supplementing the traditional technical update program.

The over-arching theme that emerged from this research was relatively simple but it should not be lost in this discussion:

As a result of their participation in the continuing professional education program planning group the eight agricultural education teachers in this case study had established a sense of ownership of their continuing professional education experiences that included the responsibility for the development of the professional practices of themselves and their peers.

If we would have teachers take a more active role in their profession, then fostering a sense of ownership in those teachers by vesting in them more of the responsibility for planning their continuing professional development might be an important step. Perhaps it is time for leaders in state departments of education and universities who have traditionally maintained centrality of influence in the agricultural education profession to recognize that the teachers can assume more ownership in their profession if they are given the opportunity to do so. Moreover, that increased sense of ownership may serve to empower the teachers in ways that we cannot yet fathom.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Alignment of Research Questions, Propositions, Interview Questions, & Supporting Literature

Research Question	Proposition	Interview Questions Round One	Interview Questions Round Two	Supporting Literature
<p>1. How do agriculture teachers describe their participation in the planning of the continuing professional education program?</p> <p>2. Why do teachers participate in the continuing professional education program planning process?</p>	The participation of learners is integral to the work of continuing professional education program planning.	Please share with me how you have been involved in the planning of the annual agricultural education in-service conferences that take place each summer.	<p>What definitely needs to continue in order for teachers to continue to participate in the planning process?</p> <p>How long do you plan to remain as a part of the planning group?</p> <p>Why?</p>	(Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 2006)

<p>1. How do agriculture teachers describe their participation in the planning of the continuing professional education program?</p> <p>2. Why do teachers participate in the continuing professional education program planning process?</p>	<p>The communication dynamics within a group influences the ability of individuals to participate in group discussions and decisions.</p>	<p>Describe the group communication; particularly those members that represent different groups? Could you describe a time when your voice was 'heard' or when voice was not heard or ignored. Do you think that others in the group pay attention to what the teachers are saying?</p>	<p>What advice would you share with a state group that wants to start including teachers (or more teachers) in the planning process?</p>	<p>(Forester, 1989; Kreisberg, 1992)</p>
<p>1. How do agriculture teachers describe their participation in the planning of the continuing professional education program?</p> <p>2. Why do teachers participate in the continuing professional education program planning process?</p>	<p>The relationships between partner groups responsible for continuing professional education programs will influence how the individuals representing each group participate in the program planning work.</p>	<p>How does the NYAAE partner with the others in the planning group to provide the in-service conference? How are decisions made in the group? What part do you play in making the decisions?</p>	<p>What could be done by state staff and NYAAE members to improve or increase teacher participation in the planning process? What advice would you share with a state group that wants to start including teachers (or more teachers) in the planning process?</p>	<p>(Queene, 1997)</p>

3.	How do the agricultural education teachers perceive that they influence the planning group decisions regarding the continuing professional education program planning activities and design?	Continuing professional education programs are influenced by the learners who participate in the program planning.	How has the conference program been influenced by the participation of teachers in the planning process?		(Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 2006)
4.	How do the teachers in the planning group perceive that their participation in the continuing professional education program planning influence their professional practice and their profession?	Participation in continuing professional education program planning influences the professional practices of the learners.	Please share with me a brief description of your agricultural education program. How has your participation in the in-service conference planning influenced your teaching practice?		(Cervero , 1988, 2000; Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 2006; Houle, 1980)

4.	How do the teachers in the planning group perceive that their participation in the continuing professional education program planning influence their professional practice and their profession?	Continuing professional education programs have an influence on the professional community they are designed to serve.	How do you think your participation in the planning of the conference influences your profession? What changes do you hope to see in your profession as a result of teachers participating in the annual summer conference?		(Noblit et al., 1991)
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APPENDIX B

Agricultural Education Professional Development Study Interview Script for Round One Interview

The purpose of this interview is to understand how agricultural education teachers who are involved in the planning of their continuing professional education programs perceive their participation in the planning process.

- I. Please share with me how you have been involved in the planning of the annual agricultural education in-service conferences that take place each summer.
 - a. What influenced your decision to become involved in the planning of the annual in-service conferences?
 - b. What was your first experience as part of the planning group for the annual conference?
 - c. How did you see the planning process before you became involved?
 - d. How has that perception changed?
- II. The annual agricultural education in-service conference is planned by a group of people that includes the state staff, the Director of the New York Ag Tech Prep program, faculty from two universities and teachers that represent the NYAAE (New York Association of Agricultural Educators). How does the NYAAE partner with the others in the planning group to provide the in-service conference? (Queeney, 1997)
 - i. Two parts for program:
 1. Facility – who decides locations?
 2. Program
 - b. Describe the group communication; particularly those members that represent different groups? (Forester, 1989; Kreisberg, 1992)
 - c. A time when ‘heard’ or when voice was not heard or ignored. (Forester, 1989; Kreisberg, 1992) Do you think that others in the group pay attention to what the teachers are saying?
 - d. Could you share an example of a time in which there was a conflict or disagreement in how the program was planned or what the program included? How did the group resolve this conflict? (Forester, 1989)
 - e. How are decisions made in the group? (Kreisberg, 1992)
 - i. Example – how does the group decide the location of the conference? (from pilot interview)
 - f. What part do you play in making the decisions? (Kreisberg, 1992)
 - i. Did you think you had the opportunity to participate and freely share your thoughts during the meeting? For example, did you share your opinion on the site or the date for 2008?

- III. How has the conference program been influenced by the participation of teachers in the planning process? (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Forester, 1989)
 - a. What is the purpose of the conference?
 - b. How do you represent the interests of the agriculture teachers in this planning group? (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)
 - c. How might the teachers' participation in the planning limit the effectiveness of the conference? (from pilot interview)
 - d. How might the teachers' participation as presenters limit the success of the conference? (from pilot interview)
- IV. How do you think your participation in the planning of the in-service conference influences your profession? (Curry, Wergin, & Associates, 1993)
 - a. What changes do you hope to see in your profession as a result of teachers participating in the annual summer inservice program? (Noblit et al., 1991)
 - i. Why do we plan this conference? What is the purpose of having the conference? (from pilot interview)
 - ii. How do you see the conference connecting to the development or growth of the profession? (from pilot interview)
 - iii. How do you hope that the profession will change in the future through the professional development program? (from pilot interview)
 - iv. As President is your role in the planning of the conference any different than the others in the group?
- V. Please share with me a brief description of your agricultural education program.
 - a. What courses are you currently teaching?
 - b. How have your courses changed over time?
- VI. How has your participation in the in-service conference planning influenced your teaching practice?
 - a. Why have you been involved in the planning group for _____ years?

Is there anything else you would like to share with me regarding the planning of the annual agricultural education teacher conference?

APPENDIX C

Agricultural Education Professional Development Study Interview Script for Round Two (as submitted to IRB)

The purpose of this interview is to understand how agricultural education teachers who have been involved in the planning of their continuing professional education programs for a number of years perceive how their participation in the planning process has changed over time. This interview will occur after the initial interviews in Round 1 of the study.

As a long-term member of the NYAAE (New York Association of Agricultural Educators) executive committee you have also been involved in the annual in-service conference for a number of years. During today's discussion I would like to learn more from your experience in the program planning.

- I. But, before I ask you questions about your experience in the planning group, do you have any thoughts or comments that you have thought about since we last visited?
- II. So, as a long term member of the planning group, how has your participation changed over time?
- III. The remaining interview questions for this round will be developed based on the analysis of the interviews from Round 1.

The final question in this interview session will be
What advise would you give to other agriculture teachers who may consider running for an office in NYAAE and therefore become a part of the in-service conference planning group?

APPENDIX D

Agricultural Education Professional Development Study
Observation Protocol
Group Meetings

The purpose of observing the meetings of the New York Association of Agricultural Educators Executive Committee was to observe the portion of the meeting that will be devoted to the committee's discussion of the summer inservice conference planning with the Agricultural Education Outreach staff person.

It is expected that the following people will be in attendance at the meeting: seven of the eight teacher leaders, two university faculty, one staff person from the Agricultural Education Outreach staff, one staff person from the NY Agricultural Tech-Prep program and possibly the NY State Education Department representative for agricultural education.

During the meeting the following constructs will be used to guide/focus the research observer.

- I. Teacher involvement in the planning discussions and decisions (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)
- II. Do all teachers participate? (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)
 - a. How does teacher participation differ between individuals?
- III. Are there teacher-to-teacher discussions? If so, how are ideas negotiated between individual teachers? (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)
- IV. Are there teacher-to-staff/university faculty discussions? If so, how are ideas negotiated between individual teachers and staff/university faculty? (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)
- V. What observations may be made of the relationships between members of the group? (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)
- VI. How is power exhibited in the group/between group members? (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)
- VII. How do the representatives of the different organizations work together to develop the plans for the inservice program? (Cervero, 1992, 2000; Queeney, 1997)
 - a. Describe the communication between individuals that represent different groups (Forester, 1989; Kreisberg, 1992)
 - b. How are conflicts or disagreements resolved? (Forester, 1989; Kreisberg, 1992)
 - c. How are decisions made within the group? (Kreisberg, 1992)
 - d. How do teachers participate in decision making? (Kreisberg, 1992)
- VIII. How does the planning group connect the inservice program to the development of their profession? (Curry, Wergin, & Associates, 1993)

Draw a diagram of the meeting room and label the location of each person during the meeting.

APPENDIX E

Documents Analyzed as Part of the Case Study:

Year of Conference	Document Description
2008	Conference planning ideas list from state staff files
	Final conference registration packet
	Geneva Agriculture Field Station contacts and idea
	Geneva Agriculture Field Station draft schedule
	Draft letter to staff at the Geneva Agriculture Field Station
	Email from state staff to planning committee regarding contact with the host hotel
	Email from state staff for the planning committee meeting dated January 10, 2008
	NYAAE Executive Board minutes from the October 13, 2007 meeting
	Spreadsheet of cost comparisons of the hotels considered for the conference
	Teacher feedback during the fireside chats
	NYAAE constitution and bylaws
	NYAAE summer professional development survey (web based)
	Email from region one representative to the president regarding location
	Email from the president to the Board regarding location and costs
	Email from the state staff to the Board regarding location and costs
	Email from the region one representative to the Board regarding location
	Email from the president to the planning committee regarding location
	Email from state staff to Board regarding November 12 conference call
	Email from state staff to president regarding November 12 conference call
	Email from past president to the Board regarding November 12 conference call
	Email from region three representative to state staff regarding November 12 conference call
	Agricultural Education Outreach Annual Report
2007	Results from the individual conference workshop evaluation forms
	Results of the overall conference program evaluation
	Children's conference program
	2007 conference program
	Board meeting minutes for the January 17, 2007
	Board meeting minutes for the October 6, 2006
	Findings reported in the T. Park professional development study
	Annual NYAAE business session minutes June, 2006
	Planning committee meeting notes from the October meeting
	NYAAE Executive Board conference call minutes, November, 2006
	Agricultural Education Outreach Annual Report

2006	2006 conference program
	Conference evaluation results
	Notes from state staff planning
	NYAAE conference call minutes for November 6, 2005
	NYAAE business session minutes June, 2005
	Draft program for 2006
2005	2005 conference program
	Conference evaluation results
	2005 summer conference workshop ideas
	List of ideas from state staff
	NYAAE Executive Board meeting minutes November 12, 2004
	Notes from conference call January 26, 2005
2004	2004 conference program
	Final conference evaluation summaries
	2004 workshop ideas
	Evaluation comments
	NYAAE Executive Board meeting minutes October 4, 2003
	NYAAE business session minutes June, 2004
	Spreadsheet of officer responsibilities at the conference
2003	2003 conference program
	NYAAE business session minutes June 27, 2003

APPENDIX F

(Letter to all group members regarding meeting observations)

Dear

As you may know, my dissertation topic is the study of planning continuing professional education programs (professional development) for agricultural education teachers. My study is specifically designed to help me understand the perspectives and participation of teachers who are involved in planning a professional development program. To carry out this study I would like to have the opportunity to specifically study the participation of the NYAAE executive committee members in the planning of the annual summer conference. I have proposed to use several methods of investigation to help me understand the dynamics of this process. One method would be to observe the group's planning meetings, conference calls, and email communications regarding the conference planning.

As a member of the conference planning group I am asking that you to consider allowing me to observe the groups meetings and discussions. I would like to tape-record the meetings if everyone in the group agrees and is comfortable with that practice. If tape-recording the meetings seems to intrude on the flow of ideas and discussions I would certainly eliminate that activity from the study and simply take written notes of the discussions. If you do not feel comfortable with me using the observations of the meetings as part of my study or you do not want to have the meetings tape-recorded, I will be more than willing to honor your decision.

I would like to contact you by phone within the next week to explain this study further and address any questions or concerns you may have about the observations of the group meetings. I am looking forward to talking with you and I certainly appreciate it if you will consider participating in this study through your engagement in the planning meetings.

Sincerely,

Donna M. Moore

APPENDIX G
**Continued Professional Education Program Planning Consent Form
Observation of Meetings**

You are invited to take part in a research study focused on continued professional education program planning for secondary agricultural education teachers. We are asking you to take part because you are a member of the planning group for the annual four-day summer agricultural education in-service conference. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how secondary agricultural education teachers engage in the planning and implementation of a continued professional education program. You must be a part of the planning group to take part in this study.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, we ask that you allow me to observe all meetings of the in-service conference planning group including formal in-person meetings, conference calls, and email exchanges that address conference planning topics or issues.

Risks and benefits: We do not anticipate any risks for you participating in this study, other than those encountered in day-to-day life. The study will not have any direct benefits for you, but your participation will help us learn more about how teachers participate in in-service conference planning.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to refrain from allowing us to observe the planning group meetings now or at any time in the future. If you decide not to take part it will not affect your current or future relationship with Cornell University. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality: An alias will be used during the observations rather than your real name. In any written publications the researcher will not include any information that could make it possible to identify you. The audiotapes from the observations will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher will have access to this tape. The written transcript of the observations and electronic file will also be kept secure. This consent form will be stored in a locked file separately from the tape and transcript.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Donna M. Moore. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Donna Moore at dmm51@cornell.edu or 518-330-8028 or William G. Camp, faculty supervisor of the project, at wgc4@cornell.edu or 607-255-9269. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board for Human Participants (IRB), www.irb.cornell.edu, irbhp@cornell.edu or by phone 607-255-5138.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

I understand that the planning group meetings will be audio taped.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on September 28, 2007.

APPENDIX H

Letter to Teachers Regarding Round One, Part One Interviews

October 13, 2007

Dear

Thank you for your willingness to help me out with my study of teacher continuing professional education program planning. I am really excited about the opportunity to learn about your perspective of the planning process. It is very important to me that you feel that the time you give to participating in the two interviews is time well spent. I hope that having the opportunity to reflect on the planning process and specifically your participation in that process; will be of benefit to you.

I would like to have a free-flowing conversation with you about the conference planning process. Because I don't want the interview to be a complete surprise to you, I have thought of a few things for you to think about before we get together. So while you are thinking about our upcoming interview, you might want to think of some stories that will help me understand how you have participated in the planning of previous conferences and how you perceived your participation influenced the conference program. I would also like to learn about what you think about the relationship between the NYAAE officers, NY Ag Tech Prep, state staff, and the university faculty that work together to plan the conference. Finally, I will be interested in learning how you perceive the conference program influences our profession and specifically how the participation of teachers in the conference planning is beneficial to the profession.

I will be interviewing you two times over the next two weeks. I expect that each interview will last no longer than 90 minutes. I am planning to audio-record and transcribe each of the interviews. Once I have completed the transcripts I will give you copies of each to review. If you think I misunderstood something or if you simply want to say something in a clearer way, I want you to feel free to make corrections, additions, or restatements.

I hope you enjoy our conversations and the opportunity to tell your story. I am looking forward to meeting with you on _____, at _____. If that is not going to be convenient for you, please give me a call at (518) 330-8028.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX I
Continued Professional Education Program Planning Consent Form
Interview Round 1

You are invited to take part in a research study focused on continued professional education program planning for secondary agricultural education teachers. We are asking you to take part because you are a member of the planning group for the annual four-day summer agricultural education in-service conference. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how secondary agricultural education teachers engage in the planning and implementation of a continued professional education program. You must be a part of the planning group to take part in this study.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a two-part interview. Each part of the interview will last about 60 – 90 minutes and will be tape-recorded.

Risks and benefits: We do not anticipate any risks for you participating in this study, other than those encountered in day-to-day life. The study will not have any direct benefits for you, but your participation will help us learn more about how teachers participate in in-service conference planning.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to refrain from participating in the interviews now or at any time in the future. If you decide not to take part it will not affect your current or future relationship with Cornell University. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality: An alias will be used during the interviews rather than your real name. In any written publications the researcher will not include any information that could make it possible to identify you. The audiotapes from the interviews will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher will have access to this tape. The written transcript of the observations and electronic file will also be kept secure. This consent form will be stored in a locked file separately from the tape and transcript.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Donna M. Moore. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Donna Moore at dmm51@cornell.edu or 518-330-8028 or William G. Camp, faculty supervisor of the project, at wgc4@cornell.edu or 607-255-9269. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board for Human Participants (IRB), www.irb.cornell.edu, irbhp@cornell.edu or phone 607-255-5138.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

I understand that this interview will be audio taped.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on September 28, 2007.

APPENDIX J

Letter to all teachers in the planning group regarding Round One, Part Two Interviews

Dear

I have really enjoyed visiting with you about your participation in the agricultural education continuing professional education conference. As an experienced member of the planning group I would like to have one more opportunity to visit with you about your long-term participation in the conference planning. The purpose of this interview will be for you to share your perspective of the evolution of teacher participation in the planning process.

Again, as you think about our meeting, please consider your role in the planning group and any changes you have observed over time. Also, please think about the conference program and any examples you have about how it has changed during your tenure in the group. Your experience and expertise will be very valuable in the study and I certainly appreciate the extra effort and time that you are taking to participate in this final interview round.

I am looking forward to meeting with you on _____, at _____. If that is not going to be convenient for you, please give me a call at (518) 330-8028.

Sincerely,

Donna M. Moore

APPENDIX K
Continued Professional Education Program Planning Consent Form
Interview Round 2

You are invited to take part in a research study focused on continued professional education program planning for secondary agricultural education teachers. We are asking you to take part because you are a member of the planning group for the annual four-day summer agricultural education in-service conference. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how secondary agricultural education teachers engage in the planning and implementation of a continued professional education program. You must be a part of the planning group to take part in this study.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview that will help us examine the themes developed from the analysis of the interviews in Round 1. The interview will last about 60 – 90 minutes and will be tape-recorded.

Risks and benefits: We do not anticipate any risks for you participating in this study, other than those encountered in day-to-day life. The study will not have any direct benefits for you, but your participation will help us learn more about how teachers participate in in-service conference planning.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to refrain from participating in the interview now or at any time in the future. If you decide not to take part it will not affect your current or future relationship with Cornell University. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality: An alias will be used during the interviews rather than your real name. In any written publications the researcher will not include any information that could make it possible to identify you. The audiotapes from the interviews will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher will have access to this tape. The written transcript of the observations and electronic file will also be kept secure. This consent form will be stored in a locked file separately from the tape and transcript.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Donna M. Moore. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Donna Moore at dmm51@cornell.edu or 518-330-8028 or William G. Camp, faculty supervisor of the project, at wgc4@cornell.edu or 607-255-9269. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board for Human Participants (IRB), www.irb.cornell.edu, irbhp@cornell.edu, or phone 607-255-5138.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

I understand that the interview will be audio taped.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on September 28, 2007.

APPENDIX L

Letter inviting all teachers in the planning group to participate in a final focus group

Dear

Wow, this research study of continuing professional education program planning has been a very exciting and sometimes overwhelming experience but the opportunities I have had to visit with each of you has been the most interesting and rewarding aspect of the project. I certainly have appreciated the time and insight you have shared with me regarding your participation in the summer conference planning process. Now that I have completed all of the interview transcripts and meeting observations I have begun to analyze the data and have pulled together what I think are the major themes and concepts in the planning activities. What I would like to do now is to share these themes and concepts with you in a focus group. This will give you the opportunity to react to my initial analysis and provide your perspective of these themes. I suspect that you will find points that you will think need clarification or redirection. You may also be able to provide the clarification or additional insight to strengthen the themes. This is a very exciting point in the study and I am really looking forward to sharing this material with you!

I would like to bring our group together on _____, at _____. Based on my initial communication with each of you I believe that this will work for everyone. If you have a conflict with this date or decide not to participate in the focus group, please feel free to contact me at (518) 330-8028 or dmm51@cornell.edu. I am looking forward to our visit!

Sincerely,

Donna M. Moore

APPENDIX M
**Continued Professional Education Program Planning Consent Form
Focus Group**

You are invited to take part in a research study focused on continued professional education program planning for secondary agricultural education teachers. We are asking you to take part because you are a member of the planning group for the annual four-day summer agricultural education in-service conference. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how secondary agricultural education teachers engage in the planning and implementation of a continued professional education program. You must be a part of the planning group to take part in this study.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, we ask that you participate in a focus group discussion with the other teachers that participate in the agricultural education in-service planning group. The focus group session will last about 60 – 90 minutes and will be tape-recorded. Now that the researcher has begun to analyze all of the interview and observation transcripts and the data and have been pulled together, the major themes and concepts in the planning activities have been identified. What the researcher would like to do now is to share these themes and concepts with you in a focus group. This will give you the opportunity to react to the initial analysis and provide your perspective of these themes.

Risks and benefits: We do not anticipate any risks for you participating in this study, other than those encountered in day-to-day life. The study will not have any direct benefits for you, but your participation will help us learn more about how teachers participate in in-service conference planning.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to refrain from participating in the focus group now or at any time in the future. If you decide not to take part it will not affect your current or future relationship with Cornell University. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality: In any written publications the researcher will not include any information that could make it possible to identify you. The audiotapes from the observations will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher will have access to this tape. The written transcript of the observations and electronic file will also be kept secure. This consent form will be stored in a locked file separately from the tape and transcript.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Donna M. Moore. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Donna Moore at dmm51@cornell.edu or 518-330-8028 or William G. Camp, faculty supervisor of the project, at wgc4@cornell.edu or 607-255-9269. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board for Human Participants (IRB), www.irb.cornell.edu, irbhp@cornell.edu or phone 607-255-5138.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

I understand that this focus group will be audio taped.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on September 28, 2007.

APPENDIX N

Focus Group Protocol

The session will begin with a review of the consent forms. The participants will be asked to read the document and sign. They will be given a second copy for their records.

The group discussion will be informal in nature. The researcher will ask the group to review each section of the findings individually, this will be followed by an open discussion of each section. The researcher will encourage both critical and supportive comments and feedback.

Summary of Findings:

Basement Meeting:

- The meeting discussion occurred because the group wanted more group interaction during the conference
- The discussion included a push to have teachers working together in teams
- The group believed that there was a need to have an opportunity for teacher to get to know other teachers during the conference
- Members did share that they were concerned about how teachers would react to the new format, that they could have refused to interact in the teams and participate in the activities.

Benefit of teachers helping plan:

- Teachers bring their experiences to the planning work
- Teachers select workshops that connect to their practice and the respect different content focuses of different programs
- Having teachers in the group adds manpower to find workshop topics and presenters
- Teachers bring their experience to the process of selecting workshop topics
- Teachers interpret the surveys through the lens of their practice

Challenges of planning:

- Within the teacher feedback there is not consensus of agreement on a need (camp location)
- The group needs to balance the teacher interests with the financial limitations of the conference
- Diversity of the content interests of the teachers who attend conference and how the group can represent all of their needs and meet their expectations
- Negotiation within the group decision making
- The participant demographics have changed over time to include more women and this changes needs including child care issues
- Ensuring that workshops provide hands-on experiences

- Representing teachers' interests when workshops are not well received
- How does the group maintain teacher satisfaction with the new format at a new location

Change in what teacher planners teach:

- Need to keep changing what teachers teach to remain current
- Need to change what teach to meet the needs and expectation of employers
- See the conference as a critical connection between industry changes and needs and teachers' practice

Comments on Las Vegas trip:

- Attend as delegate and go to workshops for ideas for ideas for NY conference
- Not really impressed with the national workshops
- The national model is more like the old NY conference model

Communication:

- There is less concern within the group regarding communication. More concern is with the groups communication with other teachers
- The group wants to get their meeting minutes on the web site within two weeks of a meeting
- President puts updates out on the list serve so teachers know the update on conference planning
- The group uses conference calls, email, and the list serve for communication
- The president communicates with other teachers through the list service and the web survey
- Staff communicate with hotels, presenter, and host sites
- Within the board members support each other and cooperate
- The group has formal and informal communication with each other including discussions during other agricultural education events
- It is important to use the fireside chats, the web survey, conference surveys and informal discussions with teachers to learn what teachers want in the conference program
- The perception within the group may be that communication has improved within the last couple of years
- Having a committee work and then report back to the board seems to work well
- While the group uses multiple forms of communication, face-to-face is preferred for planning
- One of the goals of the conference is to improve the communication between teachers to address problems within the profession
- Hands-on workshops with interaction or group work supports communication between teachers and provides an opportunity to get to know other teachers
 - Interactive activities and team format at conference allows NYAAE board members to interact with new teachers or teachers new to the conference

Conflicts:

- Don't see within the planning work
- Members do perceive that there are conflicts between other teachers and these conflicts may be reduced by communication efforts within the conferment

Current perspectives of planning by teachers

- The conference workshops need to have less lecture and more hands-on activities
- Teachers need to be able to take material back to their classrooms
- The planning group needs to keep looking for new ideas
- The planning group needs to try to increase the participation of BOCES teachers
- It is important to have a mix of teaching professionals teachers, post secondary faculty, staff, university faculty in the planning group to make the conference successful
- Teachers provide feedback and suggestions and staff seek out most of the presenters and funding

Fireside Chats:

- New this year these were conducted each week of the summer FFA camp with additional activities at the state fair and district FFA meetings during the fall.
- This is an additional way to receive feedback and it became a much bigger activity than the group anticipated
- During the fireside chats teachers shared that they like the team format at the conference

Hands-on workshops:

- Teacher want hands-on activities based on the feedback received on the surveys
- In the past the conferences had too many workshops with only PowerPoint presentations
- The planners would be in trouble if they allow the PowerPoint format to happen again
- Teachers teaching the hands-on workshops allow teacher to share their work
- Hands-on workshops need to include materials for teacher to take home because of limited local budgets
- The workshops need to provide materials and lessons in a format that fits professional practice and are ready to go

History of professional development planning in NY Ag Ed profession

- In 1990's the president was responsible, with some help from the board members, to help for planning the annual professional development conference
- Prior to 1990's the state education department provided the leadership in conference planning
- Now there are more resources to help with the planning including staff and funding
- In 1990's there were not enough hands-on workshops

- The web survey in 2005 drove the increase in teacher participation in the planning and the new conference format
- Used conference surveys in early planning but different people were doing the planning
- Now planning is more organized
- Teamwork today is critical to bring different aspects to the planning process
- In the past there were lists of teacher interests but maybe now they are looked at more during the planning

How teacher become involved in planning:

- Some teachers wanted to meet people
- Four people had other teachers encourage them to participate in the NYAAE board and professional development planning

Including outside teachers in planning:

- Other teachers are asked for ideas about tours and recreational activities in the area of the conference location
- Teachers can contact a planning group member or a staff person with ideas for workshops

Influence of the conference on the agricultural education profession:

- Offers information on new technology and information in the agriculture industry
- Teachers may not have easy access to this new information in the agriculture industry
- The conference provides a social opportunity to interact with peers and share ideas
- It provides an opportunity to discuss issues of concern to teachers
- If new teachers attend the new program model it may help with the retention concerns because new teachers can develop relationships with peers.
- Group members think teachers who attend the conference stay teaching longer and help with retention
- The conference provides tools for classrooms
- Teachers become energized
- Having access to new information may increase a teacher's confidence and increase their retention
- The conference provides an opportunity to exchange innovative ideas
- Networking and rejuvenation

Influence of teacher participation on the conference program:

- The president helps and sometimes leads in the site selection
- It helps spread out the burden to identify the 20 + interactive workshops needed in the program
- Teachers may recognize topics that are not on the "list"
- Teachers may recognize topics that can be integrated into current courses instead of having to be an additional course

- The planning process takes longer with additional people
- It may decrease negative teacher comments because all teachers have the opportunity to participate as a volunteer in the planning group
- Teachers in group represent a range of teaching experience
- The diversity of the group with college people and staff all can add important perspectives to the planning

Negotiating:

- Group members negotiate with each other over the site
- President and staff negotiate interpretations of information when they review evaluations
- The board negotiates when to have the conference
- The group works with Career Pathways to secure funding

Negotiating power:

- The group seem to all “agree” to yield final decision making to the president
- The current president yields much of the decision making back to the planning group
- President works with Career Pathways to determine the funding available
- The president sees the group spreading out decision making between teachers, faculty, Career Pathways and staff
- The group members work with teachers to keep them involved and attending the conference
- Teachers believe that Ag Ed Outreach staff and Career Pathways staff work at negotiating how to fund the conference
- Teachers believe that they can speak up if they don’t agree with parts of the planning and their voices will be heard and respected

New program model:

- Includes sets of three sessions offered two times each to provide a broader coverage of topics
- Teams of teacher with NYAAE officers as captain compete in different events to work for prizes.
- The teams are meant to break up cliques or groups of teachers that don’t socialize with other groups and forces teachers to talk to new people
- Pictures are taken of team members in each group (including name and school) to help people get to know each other. The pictures are posted in a common area at the conference
- The planning includes trying to connect the components of the conference with pieces of the theme and to the team events
- A majority of the workshops are facilitated by teachers
- A component of the conference requires teacher to share teaching ideas
- Members of the planning group were nervous about the new model the first year that it was used.

- It encourages people to build relationships so people can connect during the year for help or ideas
- Feedback showed very strong comments of support – teachers loved it

Board interaction:

- The board approved the core pieces: date and general location
- During the meeting the president and staff share the leadership in discussions – bounced back and forth
- Everyone in the meeting interacted to ask questions; it was very interactive
- The group considered all aspects of each issue discussed: cost, location and other interest in the area
- The discussion had a lot of participation
- The board tries to balance the interest of “other” teachers
- The board supports the committee recommendations
- The diversity of the board helps cover different perspectives
- There seems to be an improvement in the group communication
- Reworking the schedule needed multiple people with multiple perspectives

Other Facilitators:

- Including staff, university faculty, and local ag industry members
- This year tech experts at the field station will be presenting but the group still needs to make sure there are hands on experiences
- They don’t like being “sold” a product

Participation in Planning Influence on Practice:

- They get ideas just from committee work to take back to the classroom
- They feel more professional
- The local administration recognizes leadership roles
- They improve work done to plan in work

Political Objective:

- They bring resources back to school that helps local program and relationships with administration

Power Dynamic:

- They perceive power as balanced on board

President Activity:

- The board discusses but real decision of location goes to the president
- Work with Shari and with Terry
- The president needs to listen
- The format decision is led by the president
- The president leads communication with the board

Professional Development Planning Committee Act:

- The positives and negatives options were considered before making recommendations
- Everyone actively participates
- The group considered many aspects, both social and educational objectives
- The group supports the president as the decision maker
- The group is very concerned about representing teachers' interests
- The group informally visits at events to conduct parts of planning
- The committee has only existed for two to three years – it started after the web survey was conducted
- The group relies on the prep work of the president and staff
- The web survey appears to be a major tool
- The group depends on the staff to track down details
- The group develops the format and program components

Professional problems address by the conference:

- There was an effort to reduce the clicks or 'groups' in the professional groups
- Make an effort to encourage teachers to work together
- An effort to improve the communication by getting everyone to know each other

Reference to conference surveys:

- Teachers want hands-on
- Provides teachers' topic requests
- Use feedback with committee
- Helps focus the planning

Reference to web survey:

- The group asked to see it at the first meeting and asked to have it sent to them
- Provided the group with a lot of input
- Committee thinks the teachers see that the group is using the feedback
- The effort to collect the data was lead by the teacher leaders
- The leadership is planning to do it every couple of years

Relationship:

- The group design workshops to increase the interaction so people could get to know each other

Relationship between organizations:

- Career Pathways is a source of funding while NYAAE and staff lead the planning
- The group talks about inviting Finger Lakes Community College to participate in the 2008 conference
- The group sees that staff has the ability to identify people to help

- SUNY Alfred and Cobleskill faculty participate by facilitating workshops and by building relationships with secondary teachers that helped students that went on to the postsecondary institutions
- The group sees that they need to involve more BOCES teachers
- SED provides policy updates
- Different organization bring different perspectives to professional development
- The leadership for planning is balanced teachers/Career Pathways/Ag Ed Outreach/Cornell
- The NYAAE constitution lists on purpose of the group as the development of relationships with other organizations

Relationships between teachers and staff:

- The president and staff work together to put together the initial ideas for the conference location, times, activities and bring it to the group
- Both share in discussion information with the group
- Staff present different perspectives on issues
- Career Pathways provides financial support for the teacher activities

Social objectives:

- Social plans are a part of the conference preparation: boat trips, socials, extra activities in the areas
- The teachers want a conference format that encourages sharing and networking
- The teams allow people to get to know others easier
- Teachers report sharing materials with others during the year

Teacher beliefs about professional development:

- As an elective teachers need to keep changing course material and offer new courses and therefore they need to have access to new 'training'
- Teachers have differing learning styles, so they can't just lecture during a period
- Interaction helps the learning process and retention of new material (7:11)
- Need to include interactive recreational activities
- Building relationships helps students at the secondary and postsecondary levels
- Teacher facilitators are accessible to our teachers during the year for help and suggestions (grafting)
- Need to have positive experiences which includes the layout of space

Concerns with traditional conference format - 2005 and earlier:

- Lack of interaction left new people on their own with lodging and free time
- Clicks of friends sat together and did not mix with the new people
- Stuffy environment
- You don't like to be 'sold' a product
- Too many university lead sessions
- Historically teachers were responsible for planning the whole conference was haphazard with no funding and no help

- Too many of the workshops had all PowerPoint and lacked a hands-on component
- Several sites of previous conferences lacked the space within the meeting rooms and location for teachers to gather socially after conference sessions

Teachers early understanding of planning:

- Members of the board were not as involved in the planning until the summer of 2005
- Early in their careers teachers were not aware of how conference programs were planned
- Teachers sent out an e-mail asking other teachers for ideas for workshops
- Too much curriculum from Cornell that was not completely done

Teachers as workshop facilitators:

- During this year's meetings they have begun to identify potential teacher facilitators
 - Rachel – lab aids
 - John K. – hydraulics
 - Marty – agri-science teacher of the year
 - Than – vegetables
 - Betsy – animal science
 - Phil – viticulture
 - Kevin – metal working
- Trying to increase teacher presenters while still having people from Cornell and National FFA
- Group has seen on surveys that teachers like workshops taught by teachers because it is seen as having practical application
- Teachers have reported receiving e-mails after conferences with requests for additional help
- Materials presented by teachers work and have been tested
- The only limitation identified was that teacher presenters did not get to go to the other workshops offered during the same session

Teachers local professional development planning activity:

- Members of the group have taught workshops for teachers in their local schools
- Three teachers have schools with curriculum coordinators or administrators that plan all programs
- J, JB, P, B serve on a local committee
- Needs are different than the needs of other teachers in the district
- Not all teachers participate in the things a group plans
- Not as many say in local – less responsibility

Technical Update:

- Needed to remain current with changes in the agriculture industry

- Technical updates are integrated into existing courses (hydroponics) and are used to create more courses (aquaculture, vet science, food science)
- Requires input of ideas from not only teachers but also from state staff, Ag Tech Prep and university faculty because teachers can't get out enough to see all the new topics and issues

Why teachers are involved in planning:

- Was encouraged by another teacher
- Finds it rewarding when other teachers say they really got a lot out of the conference and are looking forward to attending again
- Because of so many changes in state leadership, there was a need to be involved to help with consistency
- Enjoy knowing what is going on and enjoy helping
- In a position to help change something if change is needed
- Believe working as a professional development team helps grow ag programs
- Want to help improve program format – continue hands-on emphasis

Representing teacher's interests:

- During meetings members of the group have stated that they expect fewer people to come to this year's conference since it is not at Camp Oswegatchie
- During the planning group members have tried to make sure the facilities can accommodate a children's program to meet teacher needs
- The group recognizes that some people don't come to conference when it is at Camp O
- The board discussed the pros and cons of scheduling the conference during Regents week
- Group decided to make sure minutes are posted to help with communication to teachers
- The planning group discussed the pros and cons of each hotel before making their recommendation
- While cost was recognized as a critical factor, this group also was concerned about comfort and quality workshop space
- The group members stated that it is their responsibility to listen to the teacher concerns and ideas

APPENDIX O

Summary of Category Development Agricultural Education Teacher Participation in Continuing Professional Education Planning

In this study all of the categories were developed during the research and were verified by the study participants during the focus group session.

Categories within each Theme	Origination
Theme: Evolution of the Planning	
Basement meeting	Participants
Technical updates	Literature
Benefits of teachers helping plan	Investigative
Current perspectives on planning	Investigative
Early understanding of planning	Investigative
History of planning for this program	Investigative
President activity	Investigative
Board and committee interaction	Literature
Theme: Teacher Influence on Conference format and focus	
Concerns with traditional conference format	Participants
Hands-on workshops	Participants
Including outside teachers in planning	Participants
New program model	Participants
Teacher beliefs about continuing professional education	Investigative
Committee activity	Investigative
Reference to conference surveys	Investigative
Reference to web survey	Investigative
Theme: Responsibility for the Profession	
Representing teachers' interests	Participants
How teachers became involved in the planning	Investigative
Why teacher planners are involved in planning	Investigative
Influence of the conference on teacher practice	Literature
Influence on profession	Literature
Political objective	Literature
Theme: Selection of Program Components Based on Relevance	
Comments on Las Vegas Trip	Investigative
Representing teachers' interests	Participants
Teachers as facilitators	Participants
Other facilitators	Participants

Hands-on workshops	Participants
Theme: Cooperation and Collaboration Among the Organizations	
Negotiation	Literature
Negotiating power	Literature
Board and committee interaction	Literature
Theme: Communication within the Planning Group	
Communication	Literature
Theme: Responsibility for Communication with and Representing other Teachers	
Challenges in planning	Participants
Fireside Chats	Participants
Board and committee interaction	Literature
Representing teachers' interests	Participants

APPENDIX P

Web Based Survey Result & Analysis for
 NYAAE Professional Development Survey
 December 4, 2006
 Excerpts

6) What are the areas NYAAE could pursue to facilitate your attendance at Professional Development Conferences?

Agr Business inservice Business partnerships
Directly forward invitations the NYC Schools Chancellors Office, the Regional Superintendence (Region 6), and copy to relevant school Principals requesting participation of Horticulture and Environmental Science teachers, and apprising them of the professional developments credits and hand-on training opportunities provided at these conferences.
giving (sharing) specific content that is ready to be taught
Unfortunately, there is no good time of the year for teachers, however, I might enjoy having a full weekend off before having to go to conference (start it on a Monday.)I would really rather have it at the end of Regents week, most ag teachers are not proctoring/giving Regents exams. It would be great to be done with conference no later than a day after the end of school.(Perhaps have conference the final Tuesday/Wednesday-Friday/Saturday. I get tired of having my time eaten up through out the year, and then having 4 days more taken that is volunteer time right after school ends with no real reprieve.
I'm in eastern NY and attend those that are no more than 4 or so hours away.
CDE training Animal Science Horticultural Science Aqua Science
Not sure.
I like a variety of settings for the conferences. Camp is the best to bring our kids.
Environmental Science, Middle School Technology, CDE's
For myself in the future, having a baby and affording to bring my husband will dictate whether or not in the near future we attend.
continued mechanics/physical sciences needed
dog behavior specialist, dog grooming clinic, veterinary technician specialty
I'm stuck going...since I'm an officers :)
camp
content hands on

focus topic on curriculum development and specific topic--such as Veterinary Assisting or Animal Science
More hands on Mechanical Curriculums
Wildlife/Fish Management Forestry Landscaping Heavy Equipment
Financial Assistance
offer in-depth training in GIS, Logging, heavy equipment maintenance
Bring Cost Down with sponsor funding
Starting an FFA Resource sharing Animal science inservice
consolidate to two days and more mechanical or related seminars
I enjoy all phases of the conference and especially being able to choose the topics that are most interesting to me.
Ways to bring cost down
demonstrate value in added CDEP goals demonstrating academic rigor relevance and enrichment for our classes.
1. Maintain Children's program (2006). 2. I need conference information to turn in Mid-December prior to the June conference to get approval.
Special Education
SAE and CDE development and participation

8) If you have been attending conferences, do you have suggestions for improvement?

I like the competition that we had last year.
make sure it is held in various parts of state regularly
Although a Hotel or Resort may provide the most convenient setting for a conference, the cost is usually prohibitive for those of us whose conference expenses are not subsidized.
I really liked the content and lesson plan sharing at this past conference.
Things have been well run, good quality workshops good materials. Having a choice of a couple workshops is good--
keep up the family options
- Hold the conference a few days later (our graduation is usually during the conference)

As one of the organizers, I hope we are doing pretty darn good each year.
options or choices
I really liked the idea of having a theme. I think that more people participate and also network, where as if they were not required to be part of a team they may

not have ever tried to network with a person off their team. This is especially important for new teachers.
Can we start a bit later on Sunday? Regardless of Sunday's schedule, I think that we can fit in another session on Monday.
like having registration papers out early so can get conference money from school before used up by others, include food and environmental allergy info/medical info that should be known slot on registration paper,
Last year was so awesome! It will be tough to top it!
Explore different areas. More workshops on biotechnology and applied science areas. I enjoy the workshops where teachers share strategies and information as well. Also, whatever we can do to keep the costs down would be great. It's hard to continue to have my school pay for the conference as it continues to become more expensive. I prefer a setting like camp because it's cheaper.
Good luck topping this past year!
Keep it as inexpensive as you can (less than \$500.00), Keep having hands-on projects that we can do with our kids, continue to provide child-care for children of attendees (I really can't attend otherwise.) Keep it fun- this last conference at Camp O. was a lot of fun- and a wealth of information/interesting topics were offered that I think everyone could benefit from.
I love camp, I feel it fits most everyone's needs and likes. Keep going forward in the direction that meets our needs. I know, not a great suggestion.
continue with hands on (interaction needed)
My views are Camp is best for teachers with families (most economical, fun for kids, don't need new clothes). We will be in a resort when we host the regional conference.
hands on, hands on, hands on...and free stuff!
I understand that this was the first year that there was a theme to the conference. I feel that this made the conference even more interesting and worth while.
last year was great
Time of year often coincides with graduation
A little more free time. Workshops that are very hand on
Many choices available and the chance to talk to colleagues with like interests
Continue hands-on activities
The conference has been very valuable to me and I am sure everyone else who has attended. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK. MANY THANKS FOR THE TIME AND EFFORT PUT IN TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE.
Less rain next year :-)
enjoy them very much - continue and expand on hands-on, ready to teach workshops
More actual lessons and hands on activities

Always enjoyed the activities. Found the topics excellent and relevant.
More down time to discuss issues with other teachers. Have more ag teachers presenting
More natural resources.
in-depth trainings, not just segments with fluff
Gifted dynamic speakers in any area of Ag or related area but I really can not think of any at the moment.
Perhaps one day we could offer a workshop for Superintendents, Principals, and Guidance Counselors.
More attention spent on NYAAE business session - more effective meeting with time for committee work and training for new NYAAE members & trustees
Hands on events.
More hands on or a non-professional speaker like that vet at Camp O last summer. He was great.
I enjoyed last summers events and activities the best. I think the theme oriented sessions were great!
You are doing a great job. Keep the topics varied. More breaks.
broaden our speakers/presenters from outside areas beyond NYS if possible
Conference materials as given in 2006 were excellent, keep it up. I think trade shows are also a big drawing card for most organizations.

9) Do you have professional development workshop or inservice topics that you would like the NYAAE committee to consider for future conferences?

no more PowerPoint.....more hands on
Ag Business workshop Partnerships with businesses...internships
I would like to see additional offerings in advanced animal science.
energy conservation or alternative energy welding workshop (when at a college, or BOCES)that we can actually weld
1. Germinating tips for "hard to sow" seeds. 2. How to identify nutrient deficiencies in ornamental and vegetable plants. 3. Lawn/ornamental garden design. 4. Controlling common vegetable pest without using chemical pesticides.
continue going through various CDE competitions.
Workshops that show how to execute labs--especially with vet tech. (Urinalysis, blood

analysis, practice with electrophoresis, fecal smears--identifying parasite eggs within the smear, etc.
SED Requirements and how Ag fits in. an update. What options are out there and the paperwork to follow up
- Motivating students to complete work outside of the classroom/lab setting (homework, projects, etc.)
gps use
Follow up on the REAP game with Tim Moore helping make the numbers clear.
Verbal Judo
Alternative Energy Activities Mechanical Science Updates
A steady rotation through each of the curriculum areas. For example, an Ag mechanics rotation of welding, small engines, diesel engines, construction, electricity. Do this for an sci, plant scie, etc. as well. (I think we already do this pretty well)
Improving reading skills in our students Improving math skills in our students Anything that would improve the "core" skills of our students with in our classrooms. I also enjoy the orienteering skills that we learned and the hands on activities using the materials we were given
HAVE TEACHERS PRESENT ON HOW AND WHAT THEY DO TO INTEGRATE FFA AND SAE INTO THE CURRICULUM. (WITHOUT TEACHING CONTESTS ALL THE TIME)
developing a POA, how to manage your FFA officers, program marketing, how to develop middle school programs, food science, biotechnology
More hands on animal science stuff that we could bring back to the classroom. Handouts, materials, etc.
See above -- biotechnology, more workshops from science supply companies like Wards.
I like teachers sharing their best teaching ideas. Providing worksheets, tests, materials, etc.
Gaining additional certification in other areas (in addition to agriculture/technology).
finding and utilizing quality online and digital resources.
1.Business Management with the use of Quicken. 2.More of the same, project oriented workshops. 3.Wiring, and fun projects with Marty. 4.Any animal husbandry workshops.
possibly more tours (ie. windmills)
I have some new ideas Shari...when can we meet...let me know...and I can come up to you for some planning...

Offering agriculture classes for other credits, such as science and what the state requires of those agriculture courses.

Geo cashing, triangulation, landscaping design,

tours of industry

hydroponics

Plant Grafting and Food Science

Veterinary Assisting Science laboratories State Ed current topics

plant science landscaping vet science animal health wildlife/tracking/habitat projects middle school ag projects/ teamwork activities middle school FFA meetings

Landscape design software presentation and in-service by I Support Learning. 1.877.828.1216. And the professors from the colleges.

we could use some good sessions on teaching ag business

Special Education inclusion in ag programs

Program certification workshop - have time to begin process and work with teachers who have gone through the process

ag business topics, integrating aquaculture, adding more science and math activities, small fruit and tree fruit production,

Ethanol, Biodiesel, Survey with real surveying equipment, Hydraulics, Structures, Plumbing, Hydroponics

Always interested in activities/ideas that help make learning more active and hands on.

More Mechanic topics, welding, engines

More on CDE's for those of us that are new. More take home interactive lessons.

GIS-using arcview 9.1, Logging, heavy equipment maintenance

AgEng topics NatRes areas

I enjoy "hands on" combined with knowledge that I can use. Last summers was well done. I especially liked Mo Lapine's workshop and am pursuing a good computer and video camera. The topic to present at conference is not as relevant as the giftedness of the presenter. Finding presenters that can really spark my interest and keep my attention is a challenge. I still love to learn but am always trying to figure out the "quick fix" way of learning something new. Lots of time the conference speakers can present an idea but not enough to get me thinking I can master the concept and I can sense I will have to put in more time than I prefer, especially with fly tying for example.

FFA SAE FFA Classroom Offer workshops in all these areas equally

website design, taxidermy

CDE's, AG business

<p>Classes on how to better use the Ag Tech Prep Vet Science curriculum that we got a few years ago. I could use some more help with the parasites unit and dispensing medicine section. The chainsaw update that was a few years back was great, but too quick to cover so many new technologies for a teacher so ingrained with the old style of doing it. Could you do another class just like that? I was very impressed with that class but so overwhelmed with it that I haven't taught chainsaws in my class since, because what I had been teaching was no longer what I was supposed to be teaching and I couldn't remember all that I was now supposed to be teaching. As I recall, there were no handouts with the new stuff on them of us to use as a reference. Take the whole day so that we can practice, too. An update on how to teach animal nutrition would also be nice. The acronyms that I learned about in feeds and feeding in the 1970's are no longer used and I don't know what the new ones are. I understand the basics of balancing a feed ration, but I need an update on the new acronyms and types of proteins, etc. that everyone under the age of 35 knows about. As long as we are updating, how about a 2 hr class updating me on performance and production testing. Like reading a bull's sire proof and being able to interpret and use those new (at least since I was taught it in the 1970's) acronyms? Or all of the stuff on a DHIA report for a cow? Those things keep changing and it is hard to keep up with it if you aren't in the industry. How about a class on this new federal policy of animal identification? We know it is coming and some of the information we get is conflicting. How about CAFO and manure management? Maybe a SWCS person could update us on the specific requirements. I was told that numbers of animals and deadlines have changed since I first learned of this. I know that animal diseases of high priority now were not 30 years ago when I was in college. I would like to learn more about mad cow disease, Johne's, etc. I am not a person who is going to look it up on the internet. Computer use is tedious and not interesting for me, so using it is a low priority when I have such limited "free" time. Using non-pesticide means of weed and disease control for my biotech ag class would be great. A refresher course on reading micrometers and other measuring tools would be great. Using a transit for farm projects like laying out a pole barn or pond, staking out a foundation, etc. I know this is a long list, but it constitutes what I consider my weaknesses. I imagine there are many other worthy ideas out there, too.</p>
--

Integrating large animal and small animal science

grafting-trees, roses more with GPS any fun- hands on, new tools, new toys, etc.
--

curriculum public support for ag-ed on statewide basis
--

Not at this time!

Wildlife real estate building wood projects 7/8th grade technology
--

focus on capturing grants

1. Landscape Design Software training. 2. Student Record Books or something similar keeping new technology in mind.

APPENDIX Q

2005 Professional Development Final Evaluation Summary

Workshop Session Comments

- We need more hands on workshops where we actually learn info or skills that we can take back to our students
- Sunday sessions are hard to make—could we start on Monday?
- Like the choices—good variety
- Liked the format of having 3 sessions and picking 2 of them—with some group sessions
- Good having the same workshop offered twice—remind presenters to stay within the time frame
- HANDS ON! We don't need to sit and be lectured to—stuff we can take home and use in class tomorrow
- I liked the ability to pick 2 out of 3 and still get supplies
- Emphasize more hands on labs!
- Depth of information—more technical this year
- I felt like I was missing info with the 3 sessions, but liked the smaller groups
- Continue with the palm uses—more depth and technical
- Waste management pollution
- Continue idea sharing like Tech Prep workshop
- Floral design ideas
- Ag business topics
- Animal behavior
- Desktop publishing
- Forestry-lumber ideas
- Food science
- Wildlife workshop
- Need to have workshops and topics that lend themselves to doing and not just presentations
- I want to do day focuses—immersion of a subject per day—or combined programs per day--- ex. Landscape/turf/surveying in one day...forestry/construction/interiorscapes in a day
- We are like our students—we work better with our hands—get us out of our seats!
- I like the breaks available this year—in between and at nights
- Please encourage presenters that we want hands on activities like our students do!
- A few more minutes in between sessions—felt rushed all the time—a little “free” time to enjoy the facility—we were always on the go
- Little more detail to the workshops
- More hands on, shorter, eliminate tour/trip—2 days long before end of school year—Memorial Day weekend is good time

- Good mix, good pace—less power point—(maybe a presentation on effective use of power point)—keep in mind mix of content and teaching methods—which was good this year

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